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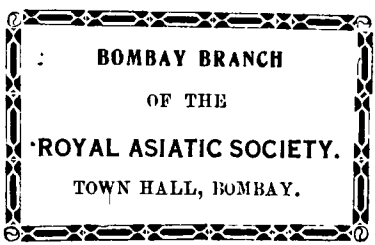
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LIFE AND TIMES

OF

RICHARD BAXTER;

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM ORME.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

RICHARD BAXTER.

CHAPTER I.

1615—1638.

Birth of Baxter—Character of his Father—Low State of Religion—Baxter's first religious Impressions—His early Education—Progress of his religious Feelings—Residence at Ludlow Castle—Escapes acquiring a Taste for Gaming—Returns Home—Illness and its Effects—Nature and Progress of his Education—Its Defects—Troubled with Doubts—Distress of Mind—Diseased Habit of Body—Goes to Court—Remarkable Preservation—Death of his Mother—His Attachment to the Ministry—His Conformity—Becomes acquainted with the Nonconformists—Ordained to the Ministry.

THE excellent person whose life and writings constitute the subject of the following memoirs, was the son of Richard Baxter, of Eaton-Constantine, in Shropshire. His mother's name was Beatrice, a daughter of Richard Adeney, of Rowton, near High-Ercall, the seat of Lord Newport, in the same county. At this place Richard Baxter was born, on the 12th [a] of November, 1615; and here he spent, with his grandfather, the first ten years of his life.

His father was a freeholder, and possessed of a moderate estate; but having been addicted to gaming in his youth, his

[a] It seems rather singular that Baxter should be guilty of a mistake respecting the day of his own birth. There is, however, a discrepancy between the date here given by himself, and that in the parish register. The following extract from it, made by my friend Mr. Williams, of Shrewsbury, shows that either Mr. Baxter or the parish clerk must have made a mistake. "Richard sonne and heyr of Richard Baxter of Eaton Constantyne and Beatrice his wife, baptized the *sixth* of November, 1615." If he was baptised on the sixth, he could not be born on the twelfth! But perhaps *sixth* is a mistake in the register for *sixteenth*.

property became so deeply involved, that much care and frugality were required to disencumber it at a future period of his life. Before, or about the time that Richard was born, an important change took place in his father. This was effected chiefly by the reading of the Scriptures, as he had not the benefit of christian association, or of the public preaching of the Gospel. Indeed, the latter privilege could scarcely then be enjoyed in that county. There was little preaching of any kind, and that little was calculated to injure, rather than to benefit. In High Ercall, there were four readers in the course of six years; all of them ignorant, and two of them immoral men. At Eaton-Constantine, there was a reader of eighty years of age, Sir William Rogers, who never preached; yet he had two livings, twenty miles apart from each other. His sight failing, he repeated the prayers without book, but to read the lessons, he employed a common labourer one year, a tailor another; and, at last, his own son, the best stage-player and gamester in all the country, got orders, and supplied one of his places. Within a few miles round were nearly a dozen more ministers of the same description: poor, ignorant readers, and most of them of dissolute lives.[b] Three or four, who were of a different character, though all conformists, were the objects of popular derision and hatred, as Puritans. When such was the character of the priests, we need not wonder that the people were profligate, and despisers of them that were good. The greater part of the Lord's-day was spent by the inhabitants of the village in dancing round a may-pole, near Mr. Baxter's door, to the no small distress and disturbance of the family.

To his father's instructions and example, young Richard was indebted for his first religious convictions. At a very early period, his mind was impressed by his serious conversation about God and the life to come. His conduct in the family also, and the manner in which he was reproached by the people as a Puritan and hypocrite, gave additional effect to his conversation. Parents should be careful what they say in the pre-

[b] In his Third Defence of the Cause of Peace, Baxter gives the names of all the individuals above referred to, with additional circumstances of a disgraceful nature in the history of each. The statement is a very shocking one, even in the most mitigated form in which I could present it; but justice to Baxter and to his account of the times, required that the facts should not be withheld. They give a deplorable view of the state of the period, and show, very powerfully, the necessity of some of the measures which were pursued at a future period for the purification of the church.

sence of children, as well as what they say to them; for if occasional addresses are not supported by a regular train of holy and consistent conduct, they are not likely to produce salutary effect. There must have been some striking indications of religious feeling in Baxter, when a child; for his father remarked to Dr. Bates, that he would even then reprove the improper conduct of other children, to the astonishment of those who heard him.[c] The account, too, which he gives of the early visitings of his conscience, shows that something was operating in him, the nature and design of which he did not then fully understand. He was addicted, during his boyhood, to various evils—such as lying, stealing fruit, levity, pride, disobedience to parents. These sins made him occasionally very uneasy, even in his youth, and cost him considerable trouble to overcome. It would be improper, however, to attach much importance to these uneasy feelings, as such emotions have frequently been experienced in early life, yet never followed by any evidence of decided change of character. It is only when they continue, or are afterwards accompanied by an entire change of life, that they ought to be considered as of heavenly origin. This was happily the case in the present instance. Baxter's early impressions and convictions, though often like the morning cloud and early dew, were never entirely dissipated; but at last fully established themselves in a permanent influence on his character.

His early education was very imperfectly conducted. From six to ten years of age, he was under the four successive curates of the parish, two of whom never preached, and the two who had the most learning of the four drank themselves to beggary, and then left the place. At the age of ten he was removed to his father's house, where Sir William Rogers, the old blind man of whom we have already spoken, was parson. One of his curates who succeeded a person who was driven away on being discovered to have officiated under forged orders, was Baxter's principal schoolmaster. This man had been a lawyer's clerk, but hard drinking drove him from that profession, and he turned curate for a piece of bread. He only preached once in Baxter's time, and then was drunk! From such men what instruction could be expected? How dismal must the state of the country have been, when they could be tolerated either as ministers or

[c] Funeral Sermon for Baxter.

teachers! His next instructor, who loved him much, he tells us, was a grave and eminent man, and expected to be made a bishop. He also, however, disappointed him; for during no less than two years, he never instructed him one hour; but spent his time, for the most part, in talking against the factious Puritans. In his study, he remembered to have seen no Greek book but the New Testament; the only father was Augustine de Civitate Dei; there were a few common modern English works, and for the most of the year, the parson studied Bishop Andrews' Sermons.[d]

Of Mr. John Owen, master of the free-school at Wroxeter, he speaks more respectfully. To him he was chiefly indebted for his classical instruction. He seems to have been a respectable man, and under him Baxter had for his schoolfellows the two sons of Sir Richard Newport, one of whom became Lord Newport; and Dr. Richard Allestree, afterwards a distinguished loyalist, for which he was made Regius Professor of Divinity, at Oxford, and Provost of Eton College.[e] When fitted for the University by Owen, his master recommended that instead of being sent to it, he should be put under the tuition of Mr. Richard Wickstead, chaplain to the Council at Ludlow, who was allowed by the king to have a single pupil. From him, as he had but one scholar, to whom he engaged to pay particular attention, much was naturally expected. But he also neglected his trust. He made it his chief business to please the great and seek preferment; which he tried to do by speaking against the religion and learning of the Puritans, though he had no great portion of either himself. The only advantage young Baxter had with him, was the enjoyment of time and books.

Considering the great neglect of suitable and regular instruction, both secular and religious, which Baxter experienced in his youth, it is wonderful that he ever rose to eminence. Such disadvantages are very rarely altogether conquered. But the strength of his genius, the ardour of his mind, and the power of his religious principles, compensated for minor defects, subdued every difficulty, and bore down with irresistible energy every obstacle that had been placed in his way. As the progress of his religious character is of more importance than that of his learning, it is gratifying that we are able to trace it very minutely.

[d] Apology for the Nonconformist Ministry, p. 58.

[e] Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 505.

The convictions of his childhood were powerfully revived when about fifteen years of age, by reading an old torn book, lent by a poor man to his father. This little work was called 'Bunny's Resolution,' being written by a Jesuit of the name of Parsons, but corrected by Edmund Bunny.[f] Previously to this he had never experienced any real change of heart, though he had a sort of general love for religion. But it pleased God to awaken his soul, to show him the folly of sinning, the misery of the wicked, and the inexpressible importance of eternal things. His convictions were now attended with illumination of mind, and deep seriousness of heart. His conscience distressed him, led him to much prayer, and to form many resolutions; but whether the good work was then begun, or only revived, he never could satisfactorily ascertain. This is a circumstance of little importance. Regeneration can take place but once, but more conversions than one are required in many an individual's life.[g] If we are assured that the great change has really been effected, the time and circumstances in which it occurs are of small moment.

Another work which was very useful to him at this time, is better known; 'The Bruised Reed,' by Dr. Richard Sibbs; a book which has passed through many editions, and has been honoured to do good to many. Here he discovered more clearly the nature of the love of God, and of the redemption of Christ; and was led to perceive how much he was indebted to the Redeemer. Till these things are understood, and their influence felt, no man can be considered as converted. The works of Perkins 'On Repentance,' on 'Living and Dying well,' and 'On the Government of the Tongue,' also contributed to instruct and improve him. Thus, by means of books rather than of living

[f] This work was originally written on the principles of Popery; but Bunny expunged and altered whatever was unsuitable to the Protestant belief, and published it in an improved form. The Jesuit was naturally enough displeased at the freedom used with his work, which led Mr. Bunny to write a pamphlet in defence of his conduct. Bunny was a Puritan of the oldest class. He was rector of Bolton Percy, and enjoyed some other preferments in the church; but he was a man of apostolic zeal, and travelled much through the country for the purpose of preaching the gospel. He died in 1617. ('Athen. Oxon.' vol. 1. p. 364.) The work edited by Bunny was useful to others as well as to Baxter. Two other Nonconformist ministers, Mr. Fowler and Mr. Michael Old, were first seriously impressed by it; and Baxter tells us that he had heard of its success with others also. (Baxter against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction, p. 540.)

[g] Luke xxii. 32.

instruments, God was pleased to lead him to himself. His connexions with men tended to injure and to stumble him rather than to do him good. Among the things he mentions which had no tendency to promote his spiritual profit, was his confirmation by Bishop Morton, to whom he went when about fourteen, with the rest of the boys. He asked no questions, required no certificate, and hastily said, as he passed on, three or four words of a prayer, which Baxter did not understand.[h] The careless observance of the forms of religion, whether these forms be of human or divine ordination, is never defensible: and must always have a hardening effect on the mind.

While residing at Ludlow Castle with Mr. Wickstead, he was exposed to great temptation. When there, he formed an acquaintance with a young man, who afterwards unhappily apostatised, though he then appeared to be decidedly religious. They walked together, read together, prayed together, and were little separate by night or by day. He was the first person Baxter ever heard pray extempore, out of the pulpit; and who taught him to do the same. He appeared full of zeal and diligence, of liberality and love; so that, from his example and conversation he derived great benefit. This young man was first drawn from his attachment to the Puritans by a superior, then led to revile them, and finally to dishonour his profession by shameful debauchery. Such frequently is the progress of religious declension.

During his short residence at Ludlow Castle, Baxter made a narrow escape from acquiring a taste for gaming, of which he gives a curious account. The best gamester in the house undertook to teach him to play. The first or second game was so nearly lost by Baxter, that his opponent betted a hundred to one against him, laying down ten shillings to his sixpence. He told him there was no possibility of his winning, but by getting one cast of the dice very often. No sooner was the money down, than Baxter had every cast that he wished; so that before a person could go three or four times round the room the game was won. This so astonished him that he believed the devil had the command of the dice, and did it to entice him to play; in consequence of which he returned the ten shillings, and resolved never to play more. Whatever may be thought of the fact or of Baxter's reasoning on it, the result was to him important and beneficial.

[h] Third Defence of Noncon. p. 40.

On returning from Ludlow Castle to his father's, he found his old schoolmaster, Owen, dying of a consumption. At the request of Lord Newport, he took charge of the school till it should appear whether the master would die or recover. In about a quarter of a year his death relieved Baxter from this office, and as he had determined to enter the ministry, he placed himself under Mr. Francis Garbet, then minister of Wroxeter, for further instruction in theology. With him he read logic about a month, but was seriously and long interrupted, by symptoms of that complaint which attended him to his grave. He was attacked by a violent cough, with spitting of blood, and other indications of consumption. These symptoms continued to distress him for two years, and powerfully tended to deepen his religious feelings. A common attendant on such a state of body, depression of spirits, Baxter also experienced. He became more anxious about his eternal welfare, entertained doubts of his own sincerity, and questioned whether he had any spiritual life whatever. He complained grievously of his insensibility: "I was not then," he says, "sensible of the incomparable excellence of holy love, and delight in God; nor much employed in thanksgiving and praise; but all my groans were for more contrition, and a broken heart; I prayed most for tears and tenderness."

Ezekiel Culverwell's 'Treatise on Faith,' and some other good books, together with the assistance of Mr. Garbet, and other excellent men, were the means of comforting and still further instructing him. The apparent approaches of death on the one hand, however, and the smitings of conscience on the other, were the discipline which, under gracious influence, produced the most valuable results. They made him appear vile and loathsome to himself, and destroyed the root of pride in his soul. They restrained that levity and folly to which he was, by age and constitution, inclined. They made this world appear to him as a carcass without life or loveliness, and undermined the love of literary fame, of which he had before been ambitious. They produced a higher value for the redemption of Christ, and greater ardour of devotedness to the Redeemer himself. They led him to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and to regard all other things as of subordinate and trifling importance. The man who experienced such benefits from the divine treatment, had reason to rejoice, rather than to complain of it; and so did Baxter.

In consequence of these things, divinity was not merely carried on

with the rest of his studies,—it had always the first and chief place. He was led to study practical theology in the first place, in the most practical books, and in a practical order. He did this for the purpose of instructing and reforming his own soul. He read a multitude of the best English theological works, before he read any foreign systems of divinity. Thus his affections were excited, while his judgment was informed; and having his own benefit chiefly in view, he pursued all his studies with the greater ardour and profit. It is matter of regret that theology is often studied more with a view to the benefit of others than of the student himself. It is pursued as a profession, rather than as belonging to personal character and enjoyment. Hence it frequently produces a pernicious instead of a salutary effect on the mind, and debases rather than elevates the character. Familiarity with divine things, which does not arise from personal interest in them, is to be dreaded more than most evils to which man is liable.

The broken state of his health, the irregularity of his teachers, and his never being at any university, materially injured his learning and occasioned lasting regrets. He never acquired any great knowledge of the learned languages. Of Hebrew he scarcely knew any thing; his acquaintance with Greek was not profound; and even in Latin, as his works show, he must be regarded by a scholar as little better than a barbarian. Of mathematics he knew nothing, and never had a taste for them. Of logic and metaphysics he was a devoted admirer, and to them he dedicated his labour and his delight. Definitions and distinctions were in a manner his occupation; the *quod sit*, the *quid sit*, and *quotuplex—modes*, *consequences*, and *adjuncts*, were his vocabulary. He never thought he understood any thing till he could anatomize it, and see the parts distinctly; and, certainly, very few have handled the knife more dexterously, or to so great an extent. His love of the niceties of metaphysical disquisition plunged him very early into the study of controversial divinity. The schoolmen were the objects of his admiration; Aquinas, Scotus, Durandus, Ockham, and their disciples, were the teachers from whom he acquired no small portion of that acuteness for which he became so distinguished as a disputer, and of that logomachy by which most of his writings are more or less deformed.

Early education exerts a prodigious power over the future pursuits and habits of the individual. Its imperfections or peculiari-

ties will generally appear, if he attempt to make any figure in the scientific or literary world. The advantages of a university or academical education will never be despised except by him who never enjoyed them, or who affects to be superior to their necessity. It cannot be denied, however, that some of our most eminent men in the walks of theology, as well as in other departments, never enjoyed these early advantages. The celebrated Erasmus,—"that great honoured name," and Julius Cæsar Scaliger, had neither of them the benefit of a regular early education. As theological writers, few men, among our own countrymen, have been more useful or respected than Andrew Fuller, Abraham Booth, and Archibald Maclean, yet none of them received much education in his youth. Dr. Carey is a prodigy, as an oriental scholar, and yet never was twelvemonths at school in his life. Among these, and many other men of eminence, who never walked an academic porch, Richard Baxter holds a prominent place. In answer to a letter of Anthony Wood, inquiring whether he was an Oxonian, he replied, with beautiful and dignified simplicity—"As to myself, my faults are no disgrace to any university, for I was of none; I have little but what I had out of books, and inconsiderable helps of country tutors. Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die; that set me on studying how to live; and that on studying the doctrine from which I must fetch my motives and comforts: beginning with necessities, I proceeded by degrees, and now am going to see that for which I have lived and studied."[1]

Academical education is valuable, when it excites a taste for learning, sharpens the natural powers, and smoothes the path of knowledge; but when it is substituted in after life for diligent application, and is supposed to supply the lack of genius or industry, it renders comparatively little service to its possessor. Those who have not enjoyed it, frequently make up the deficiency by the greater ardour of their application, and the powerful energy of natural talent. This was eminently the case with Baxter. Conscious of the imperfections of his early education, he applied himself with indefatigable diligence; and though he never attained to the elegant refinements of classical literature, in all the substantial attainments of sound learning he excelled most of his contemporaries. The regrets which he felt at an early period, that his scholarship was not more eminent, he has expressed with a great degree of feeling, if not with the highest poetical elegance.

[1] Athen. Ox. vol. ii. 1125.

"Thy methods cross'd my ways: my young desire
To academic glory did aspire.
Fain I'd have sat in such a nurse's lap,
Where I might long have had a sluggard's nap;
Or have been dandled on her reverend knees,
And known by honoured titles and degrees;
And there have spent the flower of my days
In soaring in the air of human praise.
Yea, and I thought it needful to *thy* ends,
To make the prejudiced world my friends;
That so *my praise* might go before *thy grace*,
Preparing men thy message to embrace;
Also my work and office to adorn,
And to avoid profane contempt and scorn.
But these were not thy thoughts; thou didst foresee
That such a course would not be best for me,
Thou mad'st me know that men's contempt and scorn
Is such a cross as must be daily borne."

Referring to what had once been his feelings, he expresses himself with great indignation, and then gives utterance to the high satisfaction he felt in the enjoyments God had bestowed on him—better far than titles and learning.

"My youthful pride and folly now I see,
That grudged for want of titles and degree;
That blushed with shame when this defect was known;
And an inglorious name could hardly own.
Forgive this pride, and break the serpent's brain;
Pluck up the poisonous root till none remain.
Honours are shadows, which from seekers fly,
But follow after those who them deny.
I brought none with me to thy work; but there
I found more than I easily could bear:
Although thou would'st not give me what I would,
Thou gavest me the promis'd hundred-fold.
O my dear God! how precious is thy love!
Thy ways, not ours, lead to the joys above."[k]

During many of his early years, Baxter was greatly troubled with doubts about his own salvation. These were promoted in a considerable degree, perhaps, by the particular cast of his mind, and the state of his body. They respected various things which discover the imperfection of his knowledge at the time; but which, as they may be useful to others, are worthy of some attention.

He was distressed because he could not trace, so distinctly, the workings of the Spirit on his heart, as they are described by some divines; because he could not ascertain the time of his conversion; because he felt great hardness of heart, and a want of lively apprehension of spiritual things; because he had felt

[k] Poetical Fragments, pp. 31—33.

convictions from his childhood, and more of the influence of fear than of love in the regulation of his conduct; and because his grief and humiliation, on account of sin, were not greater. He was afterwards satisfied that these were not sufficient or scriptural grounds for doubting his personal interest in the salvation of Christ. He found that the mind is, in general, too dark and confused, at the commencement of the divine work, to be able to attend to the nature or order of its own operations; and that the first communications of gracious influence, in most cases, it is impossible to trace. He perceived that, while in the body, the influence of spiritual and eternal things is greatly impeded, or counteracted, in all. He saw that education and early convictions were the way in which God communicates his salvation to many; and that the soul of a believer is but gradually delivered from the safe, though troublesome, operations of fear, till it arrives at the high and excellent enjoyments of love.

Persons who are agitated with perplexities similar to those of Baxter, are frequently directed to means little calculated to afford relief. Refined disquisitions on the nature of spiritual operation, on the *kind* or degree of conviction which must be possessed at the time of conversion, or afterwards; on the evidences of faith and repentance, are not much fitted to remove the fears and anxieties of conscience. It is very questionable, indeed, whether any individual will ever obtain comfort by making himself, or the evidences of personal religion, the object of chief attention. All hope to the guilty creature is exterior to himself. In the human character, even under christian influence, sufficient reason for condemnation, and therefore for fear, will always be found. It is not thinking of the disease, or of the mode in which the remedy operates, or of the description given of these things by others, but using the remedy itself, that will effect a cure. The Gospel is the heavenly appointed balsam for all the wounds of sin, and Jesus is the great Physician: it is to him, and to his testimony, therefore as the revelation of pardon and healing, that the soul must be directed in all the stages of its spiritual career. When the glory of his character and work is seen, darkness of mind will be dissipated, the power of sin will be broken, genuine contrition will be felt, and joy and hope will fill the mind. It is from the Saviour and his sacrifice that all proper excitement in religion must proceed; and the attempt to produce that excitement by the workings of the mind on itself, must inevitably fail. Self-examination to discover the power of truth and the progress of

principle in us, is highly important; but when employed with a view to obtain comfort under a sense of guilt, it never can succeed: nothing but renewed application to the cross can produce the latter effect.

Baxter himself, long before his death, arrived at these very views. "I was once," he says, "wont to meditate most on my own heart, and to dwell all at home. I was still poring over either my sins or wants, or examining my sincerity. But now, though I am greatly convinced of the need of heart-acquaintance and employment, I see more the need of higher work; and that I should look oftener on God, and Christ, and heaven, than upon my own heart. At *home*, I can find distempers to trouble me, and some evidences of my peace; but it is above that I must find matter of *delight*, and *joy*, and *love*, and *peace* itself. I would therefore have one thought at home, on myself and sins, and many thoughts above, on the amiable and beatifying objects."[1]

But the thing which distressed him most, and from which he found it most difficult to obtain deliverance, was the conviction that, after his change, he had sinned knowingly and deliberately. Every wilful transgression into which he fell, renewed and perpetuated his distress on this account. He was led, however, to understand that though divine grace implants in the soul enmity to every known sin, which appears in general in the superiority which it maintains over evil, yet it is not always in such a degree as to resist strong temptation. That will sometimes prevail against the Spirit and the love of God; not, however, to the extinction of love, or the destruction of the habit of holiness. There is but a temporary victory: the bent and ardour of the soul are still most towards God; the return to him after transgression, when the mind has been humbled and renewed to repentance, shows more evidently than ever the fixed character of the Christian: as the needle in the compass always returns to the proper point, when the force that turned it aside is withdrawn; and as the running stream appears to flow clearer than before, when that which polluted it is removed. The continual enjoyment of divine strength, and the actual presence of spiritual motives in the mind, can alone preserve it from the evil to which it is here exposed. Sin will always generate fears, which will increase in proportion as it has been wilful or persevered in; so that the best way to keep off doubts and alarms, and to main-

[1] Life, part i. 129.

tain comfort, is to keep up obedience and dependence on God, or quickly and penitently to return when we have sinned. But "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou us from secret faults: keep back thy servants from presumptuous sins, that they may not have dominion over them."

Other perplexities, and the means of their removal, are stated at great length, and with great minuteness, by him, in his own life A specimen of them has been given above; and if these are understood, all the rest, which are only varieties of the same disease and subject to the application of the same remedy, will be sufficiently comprehended. As it is dangerous for persons afflicted with nervous disorders to read medical books, so those who are much troubled with perlexity about their spiritual state, are liable to be injured, rather than benefited, by descriptions of mental disease. The disquisitions of such a spiritual metaphysician as Baxter are more likely, if deeply pondered, to perplex the generality of Christians, than to enlighten and comfort them.

Notice has already been taken of Baxter's consumptive complaints: it may be proper, once for all, to give some particulars respecting his state of health, which will save the trouble of subsequent repetitions, throw light on his state of mind and peculiarities of temper, and enable us more correctly to appreciate, and more strongly to admire, the unconquerable ardour and devotedness of soul which could accomplish such peculiar labours with so feeble and diseased a body.

His constitution was naturally sound, but he was always very thin and weak, and early affected with nervous debility. At fourteen years of age, he was seized with the small-pox, and soon after, by improper exposure to the cold, he was affected with a violent catarrh and cough. This continued for about two years, and was followed by spitting of blood, and other phthisical symptoms. He became, from that time, the sport of medical treatment and experiment. One physician prescribed one mode of cure, and another a different one; till, from first to last, he had the advice of no less than thirty-six professors of the healing art. By their orders he took drugs without number, till, from experiencing how little they could do for him, he forsook them entirely, except some particular symptom urged him to seek present relief. He was diseased literally from head to foot; his stomach flatulent and acidulous; violent rheumatic headachs; prodigious bleedings at the nose; his blood so thin and acrid that it oozed out from the points of his

fingers, and kept them often raw and bloody; his legs swelled and dropsical, &c. His physicians called it hypochondria, he himself considered it *præmatura senectus*—premature old age; so that, at twenty he had the symptoms, in addition to disease, of fourscore! To be more particular would be disagreeable; and to detail the innumerable remedies to which he was directed, or which he employed himself, would add little to the stock of medical knowledge. He was certainly one of the most diseased and afflicted men that ever reached the full ordinary limits of human life. How, in such circumstances, he was capable of the exertions he almost incessantly made, appears not a little mysterious. His behaviour under them is a poignant reproof to many, who either sink entirely under common afflictions, or give way to indolence and trifling. For the acerbity of his temper we are now prepared with an ample apology. That he should have been occasionally fretful, and impatient of contradiction, is not surprising, considering the state of the earthen vessel in which his noble and active spirit was deposited. No man was more sensible of his obliquities of disposition than himself; and no man, perhaps, ever did more to maintain the ascendancy of Christian principle over the strength and waywardness of passion.

We return to the regular narrative of his life. In 1633, when he was in his eighteenth year, he was persuaded by Mr. Wickstead, to give up his design and preparation for the ministry, and to go to London and try his fortune at court. His parents, having no great desire that he should be a minister, advised him to follow the recommendation of his former tutor; who, in consequence, introduced him to Sir Henry Newport, then master of the revels. With him he lived about a month at Whitehall, but soon got enough of a court life, being entertained with a play instead of a sermon, on the Lord's Day afternoon, and hearing little preaching, except what was against the Puritans. These were the religious practices of the court, in the sober times of king Charles the martyr, and furnish us with a practical commentary on the book of sports. Tired and disgusted with the situation in which he was now placed, and his mother being ill, and desiring his return, he left court, and bade farewell to all its employments and promises.

While in London at this time, he formed an acquaintance with Humphrey Blunden, afterwards noted as a chemist, and for procuring to be translated and published the writings of Jacob

Behmen. Blunden was then apprentice to a bookseller, and possessed of considerable knowledge and piety; to his letters, conversation respecting books, and christian consolation, Baxter was much indebted. On his way home, about Christmas, he met with a remarkable deliverance. There was a violent storm of snow succeeding a severe frost; on the road he met a loaded waggon, which he could pass only by riding on the side of a bank; his horse slipped, the girths broke, and he was thrown immediately before the wheel. Without any discernible cause, the horses stopped when he was on the verge of destruction, and thus his life was marvellously preserved! How inexplicable to us are the ways and arrangements of Providence! In some cases, the snapping of a hair occasions death; in other, life is preserved by an almost miraculous interference.

On reaching home, he found his mother in the greatest extremity of pain, and after uttering heart-piercing groans the whole winter and spring, she took her departure on the 10th of May, 1634. Of her religious character he says nothing, except when noticing the religion of the family; from which we have reason to believe that there was hope in her end. His father, about a year afterwards, married Mary, the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks, a woman who proved an eminent blessing to the family. She reached the advanced age of ninety-six; and her holiness, mortification, contempt of the world, and fervency of prayer, rendered her an honour to religion, and a pattern to all who knew her.

Baxter's mind was now more than ever impressed with the importance of the christian ministry. He did not expect to live long, and having the eternal world, as it were, immediately before him, he was exceedingly desirous of communicating to the careless and ignorant the things which so deeply impressed himself. He was very conscious of his own insufficiency for the work, arising from defective learning and experience; and he knew that his want of academical honours and degrees would affect his estimation and usefulness with many. Believing, however, that he would soon be in another world; that he possessed a measure of aptness to teach and persuade men; and satisfied that, if only a few souls should be converted by his instrumentality, he would be abundantly rewarded; he got the better of all his fears and discouragements, and resolved to devote himself to the work of Christ. So powerful, indeed, were his own convictions of the madness and wretchedness of presumptuous sinners, and of the clearness and force of those

reasons which ought to persuade men to embrace a godly life, that he thought the man who was properly dealt with, and yet capable of resisting them, and persevering in wickedness, fitter for Bedlam than entitled to the character of sober rationality. He was simple enough to think, he had so much to say on these subjects, that men would not be able to withstand him; forgetting the experience of the celebrated reformer, who found, "that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon."

Till this time, he was a Conformist in principle and practice. His family, though serious, had always conformed. His acquaintances were almost all of the same description; and, as Nonconformist books were not easily procured, his reading was mostly on the other side. Mr. Garbet, his chief tutor, of whose learning and piety he had a high opinion, was a strict churchman; he supplied him with the works of Downham, Sprint, Burgess, Hooker, and others, who had written strongly against the Nonconformists.[m] One of that party also, Mr. Barnel, of Uppington, though a worthy, blameless man, was but an inferior scholar, while the Conformists around him were men of learning. These things increased his prejudices at the cause which he afterwards embraced. By such means he was led to think the principles of churchmen strong, and the reasonings of the Nonconformists weak.

With the exception of Hooker, the other episcopal writers here mentioned are now little known or attended to. The 'Ecclesiastical Polity' of that distinguished man both superseded and anticipated all other defences of the church of England. In it the strength of the episcopal cause is to be found, and, from the almost superstitious veneration with which his name is invariably mentioned, by the highest, as well as the more ordinary, members of the church, it is evident how much importance they attach to his labours. Of the man whom popes have praised, and kings commended, and bishops, without number, extolled, it may appear presumptuous in me to express a qualified opinion. But truth ought to be spoken. The praise of profound erudition, laborious research, and gigantic powers of eloquence, no man will deny to be due to Hooker. But, had his celebrated work been written in defence of the Popish hierarchy, and Popish ceremonies, the greater part of it would have required little alteration. Hence we need not wonder at the praise bestowed on it by Clement VIII.,

[m] Apology for Nonconformists, p. 59.

or that James II. should have referred to it as one of two books which promoted his conversion to the church of Rome. His views of the authority of the church, and the insufficiency of Scripture, are much more Popish than Protestant; and the greatest trial to which the judiciousness of Hooker could have been subjected, would have been to attempt a defence of the Reformation on his own principles. His work abounds with sophisms, with assumptions, and with a show of proof when the true state of the case has not been given, and the strength of the argument never met. The quantity of learned and ingenious reasoning which it contains, and the seeming candour and mildness which it displays, have imposed upon many, and procured for Hooker the name of "*judicious*," to which the solidity of his reasonings, and the services he has rendered to Christianity, by no means entitle him.[m]

About his twentieth year, he became acquainted with Mr. Symonds,[n] Mr. Cradock,[o] and some other zealous Nonconformist

[m] A very important and curious note respecting the Ecclesiastical Polity the reader will find in M'Crie's 'Life of Melville,' vol. ii. p. 461. The edition of Hooker's Works, which has lately issued from the press of Holdsworth and Ball, is the only correct edition which has appeared for many years; while the curious notes of the editor furnish much important illustration of Hooker's meaning, as well as supply some of the arguments of his adversaries, to which he often replies very unfairly.

[n] There were several Nonconformist ministers of the name of Symonds; so that it is difficult to determine to which of them Baxter refers. One of them was originally beneficed at Sandwich, in Kent, and went to London during the civil wars, where he became an Independent, and a Baptist, if we may believe Edwards. According to that abusive writer, he preached strange things "for toleration and liberty for all men to worship God according to their consciences!" He appears, also, to have been one of Sir Thomas Fairfax's chaplains; and was afterwards appointed one of the itinerant ministers of Wales, by the House of Commons.—*Edwards's Gangrena*, part iii. passim. Another Mr. Joseph Symonds was sometime assistant to Mr. Thomas Gataker, at Rotherhithe, near London, and Rector of St. Martin's, Ironmonger-lane. He afterwards became an Independent, and went to Holland, where he was chosen pastor of the church at Rotterdam, in the place of Mr. Sydrach Sympson. He preached before Parliament in 1641.—*Brook's Puritans*, vol. iii. pp. 39, 40. It is probable that one of these two respectable men was Baxter's acquaintance at Shrewsbury.

[o] Mr. Walter Cradock, a Welshman, on account of his Puritanical sentiments, was driven from the church in 1634, shortly before Baxter became acquainted with him. He formed an Independent church at Llanfaches, in Wales, in the year 1639. He was one of the most active labourers in the principality during the Commonwealth, and procured the New Testament to be printed in Welsh, for the use of the common people. He died about 1660, leaving some sermons and expositions, which were collected and printed in two vols. 8vo, in 1800.—*Brook's Lives*, vol. iii. pp. 382—386.

ministers, in Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood. Their fervent piety and excellent conversation profited him exceedingly; and discovering that these were the people persecuted by the bishops, he began to imbibe a prejudice against the hierarchy on that account; and felt persuaded that those who silenced and troubled such men could not be followers of the Lord of love. Still, when he thought of ordination he had no scruple about subscription. And why should he? for he tells us himself "that he never once read over the book of ordination; nor the half of the book of homilies; nor weighed carefully the liturgy; nor sufficiently understood some of the controverted points in the thirty-nine articles. His teachers and his books made him think, in general, that the Conformists had the better cause; so that he kept out all particular scruples by that opinion." It is very easy to keep free from doubts on any subject, by restraining the freedom of inquiry, and giving full credit to the statements and reasonings of one side.

About this time, 1638, Mr. Thomas Foley, of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, recovered some lands at Dudley, which had been left for charitable purposes; and adding something of his own, built and endowed a new school-house. The situation of head master he offered to Baxter. This he was willing to accept, as it would also afford him the opportunity of preaching in some destitute places, without being himself in any pastoral re' · tion, which office he was then indisposed to occupy. Accordingly, accompanied by Mr. Foley, and his friend Mr. James Berry, he repaired to Worcester, where he was ordained by Bishop Thornborough;[p] and received a licence to teach the school at Dudley. Thus was he introduced to that ministry, the duties of which he discharged with so much diligence and success for many years; which proved to him a source of incessant solicitude, and of many trials; but its blessedness he richly experienced on earth, and now reaps the reward in heaven.

[p] Of Thornborough, I have not observed that Baxter has said any thing. He lived to a great age, dying in the year 1641, in his ninety-fourth year. He was the author of a few pamphlets of a philosophical and political nature. What he was, as a religious man, I cannot tell.—*Wood's Athen. Oxon.* (Edit. Bliss,) vol. iii. p. 3.

CHAPTER II.

1638—1642.

Baxter preaches his First Sermon—Examines the Nonconformist Controversy—Adopts some of the principles of Nonconformity—Progress of his mind—Residence in Bridgnorth—The Et-cætera Oath—Examines the subject of Episcopacy—In danger from not conforming—The Long Parliament—Petition from Kidderminster—Application to Baxter—His Compliance—Commences his Labours—General View of the State of Religion in the Country at this time—Causes of the Civil War—Character of the Parties engaged in it—Baxter blames both—A decided Friend to the Parliament—Retires for a time from Kidderminster.

BAXTER preached his first public sermon in the upper church of Dudley, and while in that parish began to study with greater attention than he had formerly done the subject of Nonconformity. From some of the Nonconformists in the place, he received books and manuscripts which he had not before seen; and though all his predilections were in favour of the church as it was, he determined to examine impartially the whole controversy.

On the subject of episcopacy, Bishop Downham had satisfied him before; but he did not then understand the distinction between the primitive episcopacy, and that of the church of England. He next studied the debate about kneeling at the sacrament, and was satisfied, by Mr. Paybody, of the lawfulness of conformity to that mode. He turned over Cartwright and Whitgift; but, having procured Dr. Ames' 'Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship,'[q] and the work of Dr.

[q] Ames' 'Fresh Suit,' 4to, 1633, is one of the most able works of the period, on the subject on which it treats. Its author was a man of profound learning, great acuteness, and eminent piety. This work enters very fully into all the great points relating to the exercise of human authority in the things of God, and the introduction of human customs and ceremonies into divine worship; and though not professedly an answer to Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, embraces every thing of importance in that noted work. It has also the advantage of the Polity, in the higher respect it everywhere discovers for the Word of God, and the decided appeal it uniformly makes to it. In a sentence or two of the Preface, he gives the turning point of the whole controversy:—"The state of this war is this: we, as it becometh Christians, stand upon the sufficiency of Christ's institutions for all kind of worship. *The word*, say we, and

Burgess,[r] on the other side, he devoted himself chiefly to the examination of these two works as containing the strength of the cause on both sides. The result of his studies at this time, according to his own account, was as follows:

Kneeling at the sacrament he thought lawful. The propriety of wearing the surplice he doubted; but was, on the whole, inclined to submit to it, though he never wore one in his life. The ring in marriage he did not scruple; but the cross in baptism he deemed unlawful. A form of prayer and liturgy he thought might be used, and, in some cases, might be lawfully imposed; but the church liturgy he thought had much confusion, and many defects in it. Discipline he saw to be much wanted; but he did not then understand that the very frame of diocesan episcopacy precluded it; and thought its omission arose chiefly from the personal neglect of the bishops. Subscription he began to judge unlawful, and thought that he had sinned by his former rashness; for, though he yet approved of a liturgy and bishops, to subscribe, *ex animo*, that there is nothing in the articles, homilies, and liturgy, contrary to the word of God, was what he could not do again. So that subscription, the cross in baptism, and the promiscuous giving of the Lord's supper to drunkards, swearers, and all who had not been excommunicated by a bishop, or his chancellor, were the three things to which at this time he became a nonconformist. Although he came to these conclusions, he kept them, in a great measure, to himself; and still argued against the Nonconformists, whose censoriousness and inclination to separation he often reproved. With some of them he maintained a dispute in writing, on kneeling at the sacrament, and pursued it, till they were glad to let it drop. He laboured much to repress their boldness, and bitter-

nothing but the word, in matters of religious worship. The prelates rise up on the other side, and will needs have us allow and use certain human ceremonies in our Christian worship. We desire to be excused, as holding them unlawful. Christ we know, and all that cometh from him we are ready to embrace: but these human ceremonies we know not, nor can have anything to do with them. Upon this they make fierce war upon us; and yet lay all the fault of this war, and the mischiefs of it, on our backs."

[r] The work of Dr. John Burgess, to which the 'Fresh Suit' was a reply, is his 'Answer to the Reply to Dr. Morton's Defence.' 4to. 1631. Bishop Morton had written 'A Defence of the Innocence of the three Ceremonies of the Church of England—the Surplice, the Cross after Baptism, and Kneeling at the Sacrament.' 4to. 1618. To this Dr. Ames published a reply. Morton did not think proper to meet Ames himself, but devolved the task on Burgess, who gave hard and abusive words in abundance, but great poverty of argument, as the work of Ames very successfully shows.

ness of language against the bishops, and to reduce them to greater patience and charity. But he found that what they suffered from the bishops was the great impediment to his success; that he who will blow the coals must not wonder if some of the sparks fly in his face; and that to persecute men and then invite them to charity, is like whipping children to make them give over crying. He who will have children, must act as a father; but he who will be a tyrant, must be content with slaves.

It is gratifying and instructive to be furnished with such an account of the progress of Baxter's mind. It strikingly displays his candour, and his fidelity to his convictions. Whether he employed the best means of arriving at the truth, may be questioned; the shorter process, of directly appealing to the Bible, might have saved him a great deal of labour and perplexity; but this was not the mode of settling controversies then generally adopted. The conclusions to which he came, were fewer than might have been expected, or than afterwards satisfied his own mind; but they probably prepared him for further discoveries, and greater satisfaction. He who is faithful to that which he receives, and who studies to know the mind of God, will not only be made more and more acquainted with it, but will derive increasing enjoyment from following it.

Baxter continued in the town of Dudley about a year. The people were poor but tractable; formerly they were much addicted to drunkenness, but they became ready to hear and obey the word of God. On receiving an invitation to Bridgnorth, the second town in Shropshire, however, he saw it his duty to leave Dudley, and to remove thither. Here he acted as assistant to Mr. William Madstard, whom he describes as "a grave and severe divine, very honest and conscientious; an excellent preacher, but somewhat afflicted with want of maintenance, but more with a dead-hearted, unprofitable people." In this place Baxter had a very full congregation to preach to; and was freed from all those things which he scrupled or deemed unlawful. He often read the Common Prayer before he preached; but he never administered the Lord's Supper, never baptised a child with the sign of the cross, never wore a surplice, and never appeared at any bishop's court. The inhabitants were very ignorant. The town had no general trade, and was full of inns and alehouses; yet his labours were blessed to some of the people, though not to the extent in which they were successful

in some other places. He mentions that he was then in the fervour of his affections, and never preached with more vehement desires of men's conversion; but the applause of the preacher, was the only success he met with from most of the people.

The first thing which tried him, while here, and, indeed, threatened his expulsion, was the *Et-cætera* oath. This oath formed part of certain canons or constitutions enacted by a convocation held at London and York, in 1640. The main thing objected to in it, was the following absurd clause: "Nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this church by archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, &c., as it stands now established and ought to stand."[s] This oath was ordered to be taken by all ecclesiastical persons on pain of suspension and deprivation. Alarmed at this imposition, the ministers of Shropshire, though all friends to episcopacy, appointed a meeting at Bridgnorth, to take it into consideration. Here the subject was argued *pro* and *con* by Mr. Christopher Cartwright, a man of profound learning, on the one side, and by Baxter on the other. Baxter's objections to the oath appeared to the ministers more formidable than the answers were satisfactory, so that the meeting broke up in a state of great consternation. An oath binding fallible men never to change themselves, or give their consent to alterations however necessary, and including in an "*et cætera*" nobody knows what, is among the greatest instances of ecclesiastical despotism and folly on record. A measure more ruinous to the church could scarcely have been devised.

Its effect on Baxter was, not only a resolution never to subscribe to it, but a determination to examine more thoroughly the nature of that episcopacy, the yoke of which he began to feel so insupportable. For this purpose he procured all the books he could get on both sides, and examined them with great care. Bucer de Gubernatione Ecclesiæ, Didoclavii Altare Damascenum,[t]

[s] Neal, ii. 203.

[t] The 'Altare Damascenum,' is the work of David Calderwood, author of the 'True History of the Church of Scotland,' and one of the objects of James the First's implacable dislike. It was published in Holland, in 1623, where the author was in exile, on account of his opposition to the court and episcopacy. It is intended as a refutation of 'Linwood's Description of the Policy of the Church of England;' but it embraces all the leading questions at issue between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. It attracted great attention at the time; so that King James himself is said to have read it, and replied to one of the bishops, who affirmed it would be answered—"What the devil will you answer, man? There is nothing here but Scripture, reason, and the fathers."

Jacob,[u] Parker,[x] and Baynes,[y] on the one side; and Downham, Hooker, Saravia,[z] Andrews, &c. on the other. The consequence of these researches, was his full conviction that the English episcopacy is a totally different thing from the primitive, that it had corrupted the churches and the ministry, and destroyed all christian discipline.[a] Thus this *Et-cætera* oath, which was framed to produce unalterable subjection to prelacy, was a chief means of alienating Baxter and many others from it. Their former indifference was shaken off by violence, and those who had been disposed to let the bishops alone, were roused by the terrors of an oath, to look about them and resist. Many also, who were formerly against the Nonconformists, were led by the absurdity of this oath, to think more favourably of them: so that on the whole it proved advantageous rather than injurious to their cause.

The imposition of the service book on Scotland, at this time, produced great disturbances there also, and led the Scots first to enter into a solemn covenant against Popery and superstition, and afterwards to march an army into England. The imposition of ship-money, which occasioned the celebrated resistance of Hampden, excited great and general discontent in England, and hastened on those civil commotions which so long agitated the country, and from which the most important effects arose.

The King met the Scots at Newcastle, and after a time formed an agreement with them. The Earl of Bridgewater, lord president of the Marches of Wales, passing through Bridgnorth

[u] Jacob was a Brownist, and one of the earliest Independents in England. The work referred to by Baxter, was probably his 'Reasons taken out of the Word of God and the best human Testimonies, proving a Necessity for reforming our churches in England." 1604. It is written with very considerable ability; and, amongst other things, endeavours to prove "that for two hundred years after Christ, the churches were *not diocesan*, but congregational."

[x] The work of Parker, 'De Politeia Ecclesiastica Christi, et Hierarchica opposita, Libri Tres,' 4to, 1621, was posthumous, the author having died in Holland, 1614. He was a learned and pious man: his work against 'Symbolizing with Antichrist in Ceremonies,' produced a great effect, and occasioned much trouble to the writer. Parker was, in sentiment, partly Presbyterian, and partly Independent.

[y] Paul Baynes was the author of 'The Diocesan's Trial,' in answer to Dr. Downham's Defence.

[z] Adrian Saravia was a celebrated scholar, a native of Hedin in Artois, but who lived many years in England, and was one of the warmest supporters of episcopacy. He published, among other things, a treatise on 'The divers Degrees of Ministers of the Gospel," and a reply to Beza's tract 'De Triplici Episcopatu.' He was one of the translators of the Bible appointed by King James, and died shortly after the finishing of that work, in his eighty-second year.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. i. p. 765.

[a] Baxter's 'Treatise of Episcopacy;'—Preface.

to join his majesty, was informed on Saturday evening, that neither Mr. Madstard nor Baxter used the sign of the cross; that they neither wore a surplice, nor prayed against the Scots. These were crimes of no ordinary magnitude in those days of terror. His lordship told them that he would come to church on the morrow, and see what was done. Mr. Madstard went away, and left the reader and Baxter to face the danger. On the sabbath, however, his lordship suddenly changed his purpose, and went to Litchfield, so that nothing came out of the affair. "Thus I continued," says Baxter, "in my liberty of preaching the Gospel at Bridgnorth, about a year and three quarters, which I took to be a very great mercy in those troublesome times."

The Long Parliament now began to engage attention, and its proceedings produced the most powerful effects on the country. The members soon discovered their hostility both to ship-money, and the *Et-cætera* oath; while their impeachment of Strafford and Laud, showed their determination to resist the civil and ecclesiastical domination, under which the country had so long groaned. The speeches of Faulkland, Digby, Grimstone, Pym, Fiennes, and others, were printed and greedily bought. These excited a strong sense of danger among the people, and roused their indignation against the king and the bishops.

The unanimity of this celebrated assembly in its opposition to prerogative and high-church claims, did not arise from the members being all of one mind on religious subjects. One party cared little for the alterations which had been made in the church; but said, if parliaments be once put down, and arbitrary government set up, every thing dear to Englishmen will be lost. Another party were better men, who were sensible of the value of civil liberty, but were most concerned for the interests of religion. Hence they inveighed chiefly against the innovations in the church, bowing to altars, Sunday sports, casting out ministers, high-commission courts, and other things of a similar nature. And because they agreed with the former party in asserting the people's rights and liberties, that party concurred with them in opposing the bishops and their ecclesiastical proceedings

When the spirit of the Parliament came to be understood, the people of the different counties poured in petitions full of complaints. The number of ministers who had been silenced by the bishops, and of individuals and families who had been banished on account of religion, was attempted to be ascertained. Some who had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment, after

suffering the basest indignities, were released and brought home in triumph. Among these were Mr. Peter Smart,[b] Dr. Leighton,[c] Mr. Henry Burton,[d] Dr. Bastwick,[e] and Mr. Prynne;[f] all of whom

[b] Mr. Smart, for preaching a sermon, in which he spoke very freely against the ceremonies of the church, was fined, excommunicated, degraded, deprived, and imprisoned nearly twelve years. The damage he sustained amounted to several thousand pounds, for which he afterwards received some compensation by order of Parliament. Laud and Cosins were his chief persecutors.—*Fuller's Church Hist.* b. xi. p. 173.

[c] "Leighton (says Heylin) was a Scot by birth, a doctor of physic by profession, a fiery Puritan in faction."—*Life of Laud*, p. 126. His crime consisted in the publication of 'An Appeal to Parliament, or Sion's Plea against Prelacy.' For this offence he was condemned to suffer the loss of both ears, to have his nostrils slit, his forehead branded, to be publicly whipped, fined ten thousand pounds, and perpetually imprisoned! When this sentence was pronounced, Laud, it is said, took off his hat, and gave thanks to God. The sentence, in all its parts, was executed with shocking barbarity. At the end of his twelve years imprisonment, when set at liberty by the Parliament, he could neither see, hear, nor walk. 'Sion's Plea' is certainly written with much acerbity, and some parts of it are liable to misconstruction. When Heylin alleges that he incites Parliament "to kill all the bishops, and smite them under the fifth rib," he lies and defames. The last expression, indeed, occurs; but that it does not refer to the persons of the bishops, the following sentence from the conclusion of the appeal clearly shows—"We fear they (the bishops) are like pleuritic patients, that cannot spit, whom nothing but incision will cure, *we mean of their callings, not of their persons*, to whom we have no quarrel, but wish them better than they either wish to us or to themselves." (p. 179.) Some of his language is certainly unguarded, but in moderate times would have been liable to no misinterpretation. The physician had, no doubt, more of asperity and vindictiveness in his temper than his son, the amiable, enlightened, and heavenly-minded Bishop of Dumblane.

[d] Henry Burton was an Independent, and originally engaged about court, when Charles I. was Prince of Wales. To the loss of his place, Heylin, with his usual charity, ascribes his hostility to the hierarchy.—*Life of Laud*, p. 98. His own account is more deserving of credit. By several publications, he provoked the wrath of the High Commission Court; but for one, 'For God and the King,' he was sentenced to be punished in a similar manner to Leighton, and suffered accordingly. A narrative of himself, which he published, and the substance of which was reprinted in the 'Cong. Mag.' for 1820, is uncommonly interesting. If I may judge from this memoir, and his 'Vindication of the Churches commonly called Independent,' he was a man of piety, talents, and moderation.

[e] Dr. Bastwick, a physician at Colchester, for publishing a Latin book which reflected on the bishops, and denying their superiority to presbyters, was excommunicated, debarred the exercise of his profession, fined one thousand pounds, and imprisoned till he should recant. For another book, supposed to be written by him while in prison, the same sentence was passed and executed on him as on Burton and Prynne. Dr. Bastwick, I doubt not, was a good man; but his spirit was very violent. His book, 'The Utter Routing of all the Independent Army,' in which his fellow-sufferer Burton is the chief object of attack, is shameful for a Christian to have written.

[f] William Prynne, "a bencher, late of Lincoln's Inn," was the most extra-

had been treated with the most wanton and unmerited cruelty. Acts were passed against the High-commission court, and the secular power of churchmen; and for the continuance of the parliament till it should dissolve itself. A committee was appointed to receive petitions and complaints against the clergy, which produced multitudes of petitions from all parts of the country. As a specimen of what was brought in, White, the chairman, published 'One Century of Scandalous Ministers,' in which a most dreadful exposure is made of the ignorance, immorality, and incompetency of many of the established teachers.

The town of Kidderminster, amongst other places, prepared a petition against their minister, whose name was Dance. They represented him as an ignorant and weak man, who preached but once a quarter, was a frequenter of alehouses, and sometimes drunk. His curate was a common tippler and drunkard, a railler, and trader in unlawful marriages. The vicar knowing his incompetency, offered to compound the business with the town. Instead of his present curate, he offered to allow sixty pounds per annum to a preacher whom a committee of fourteen of them should choose. This person he would permit to preach when he pleased; and he himself would read prayers, and do any other part of the parish routine. The town having agreed to this, withdrew their petition.

After trying a Mr. Lapthorn, the committee of Kidderminster applied to Baxter to become their lecturer on the above terms. This invitation is dated the 9th of March, 1640. The legal instrument appointing him to the situation, bears the date of April 5th, 1641, and is signed by about thirty individuals. He also received a very affectionate letter from a number of persons

ordinary man of all the sufferers. His first crime consisted in writing the "Histriomastix, or a treatise against plays, masquerades," &c.; for this his ears were cropped, &c. His second crime was a libel against the bishops; for which he received sentence along with the other two. As his ears had formerly been cut off, the stumps were now literally sawed off, or in the words of a coarse, humorous epitaph composed for him, "they fanged the remnant of his lugs." He wrote more books, and quoted more authorities, than any man of his time; and did much to expose the unconstitutional and lawless measures which had been long pursued by the bishops and the court. He seems to have been an Erastian respecting church government. It is wonderful, that after having suffered so much from government interference in religion, he should have written a book to prove "that Christian Kings and Magistrates have authority, under the Gospel, to punish idolatry, apostasy, heresy, blasphemy, and obstinate schism, with pecuniary, corporal, and in some cases, with capital punishments."—*Athen. Ox.* ii. pp. 311—327.

belonging to the congregation.[g] With this invitation he was very willing to comply, as, on various accounts, he felt disposed to labour in that place. The congregation was large, and the church very convenient. The people were ignorant, rude, and loose in their manners; but had scarcely ever enjoyed any faithful, evangelical preaching. There was, at the same time, a small number of pious people among them, who were humble and holy, and fit to assist a minister in instructing the rest. The state of Bridgnorth had made him resolve never to settle among people who had been hardened under an awakening ministry; but that he would go either to those who never had enjoyed such a blessing, or to those who had profited by it. He accordingly repaired to the place, and, after preaching only one day, was chosen by the electors *nemine contradicente*. "Thus," says he, "I was brought, by the gracious providence of God, to that place which had the chiefest of my labours, and yielded me the greatest fruits of comfort; and I noted the mercy of God in this, that I never went to any place in my life which I had before desired, or thought of, much less sought, till the sudden invitation did surprise me."

His attachment to Kidderminster remained through all the changes of his future life. Speaking of it many years after he had left it, he says, with much feeling and beauty,

> "But among all, none did so much abound
> With fruitful mercies, as that barren ground,
> Where I did make my best and longest stay,
> And bore the heat and burden of the day.
> Mercies grew thicker there than summer flowers,
> They over-numbered my days and hours.
> There was my dearest flock and special charge,
> Our hearts with mutual love Thou didst enlarge:
> 'Twas there thy mercy did my labours bless,
> With the most great and wonderful success."[h]

His removal to Kidderminster took place in 1640. His previous ministry had been spent, he tells us, under the infirmities already noticed, which made him live and preach in the constant prospect of death. This was attended with incalculable benefit to himself and others; it gave much of that earnestness and unction to his preaching for which it was so eminently distinguished, and without which no one will ever preach with much success.

[g] All these documents are still preserved among the Baxter MSS. in the library at Red Cross-street.

[h] Poetical Fragments, p. 34.

His afflictions greatly weakened his temptations, excited great contempt of the world, taught him the inestimable value of time, and "stirred up his sluggish heart to speak to sinners with some compassion, as a dying man to dying men."

With these feelings he began his labours in the place which his name has immortalised. He continued in it about two years at first, till the civil wars drove him away; and after his return, at the distance of several years, he remained about fourteen more. During all this time he never occupied the vicarage house, though authorised to do so by an order of parliament; but allowed the old vicar to live in it without molestation. He found the place like a piece of dry and barren earth, overrun with ignorance and vice; but by the blessing of God on his labours, it ultimately became rich in all the fruits of righteousness. Opposition and ill-usage, to a considerable extent, he had to encounter at the beginning; but, by patient continuance in well-doing, he overcame all their prejudices, and produced universal love and veneration. At one time the ignorant rabble raged against him for preaching, as they supposed, that God hated all infants; because he had taught the doctrine of original sin. At another time they actually sought his life, and probably would have taken it, had they found him at the moment of their rage; because, by order of parliament, the churchwardens attempted to take down a crucifix which was in the church-yard. His character was slandered by a false report of a drunken beggar, which all who disliked him and his fidelity chose to believe and to propagate; but none of these things moved him, or diminished the ardour of his zeal to do good to the unthankful and the unholy.

The nature and success of Baxter's ministry at Kidderminster will be noticed with more propriety when we come to the period of his second residence. In the mean time, we must advert to the civil commotions in which the country was involved, and which, more or less, implicated all who were placed in public situations. To understand the nature of those commotions, and the part which Baxter took in them, it will be necessary to advert to the state of religion in the country at large; without a knowledge of which, it is impossible to form a correct opinion of the disastrous circumstances which produced so much misery, and have occasioned so much misrepresentation.

It has often been alleged, that the civil convulsions of the country were chiefly promoted by the Puritanical sticklers for presby-

terianism and independency; who, instigated by hatred of the episcopal hierarchy, were determined to accomplish its overthrow. Nothing can be more erroneous, as the following account, drawn up by Baxter many years afterwards, with great candour and clearness, fully shows. It gives a most melancholy view of the wretched condition of religion in England, before and at the commencement of the wars, and very naturally accounts for the turn which affairs took during their progress, by which the whole ecclesiastical system was finally reduced to ruin. It shows that the number of Nonconformists at the commencement of the civil troubles was so very small, that they could have excited no disturbance, had they even wished to do it; and that the chief cause of their increase was the injurious treatment they experienced from the bishops and their officers.

"Where I was bred, before 1640, which was in divers places, I knew not one presbyterian clergyman or layman, and but three or four nonconforming ministers. Till Mr. Ball wrote in favour of the liturgy, and against Canne, Allen, &c., and till Mr. Burton published his 'Protestation Protested,' I never thought what presbytery or independency was, nor ever spake with a man who seemed to know it. In the place where I first lived, and the country about, the people were of two sorts. The generality seemed to mind nothing seriously, but the body and the world: they went to church, and could answer the parson in responses, and thence to dinner, and then to play. They never prayed in their families; but some of them, on going to bed, would say over the creed and the Lord's prayer, and some of them the Hail Mary. They read not the Scriptures, nor any good book or catechism: few of them indeed could read, or had, a Bible. They were of two ranks; the greater part were good husbands, as they called them, and minded nothing but their business or interest in the world: the rest were drunkards. Most were swearers, though they were not all equally gross; both sorts seemed utter strangers to any more of religion than I have named, though some hated it more than others.

"The other sort were such as had their consciences awakened to some regard for God and their everlasting state, and, according to the various measures of their understanding, did speak and live as serious in the christian faith, and would inquire what was duty, and what was sin, and how to please God and make sure of salvation; and make this their business and interest, as the rest did the world. They read the Scriptures, and

such books as 'The Practice of Piety,' 'Dent's Plain Man's Pathway,' and 'Dod on the Commandments,' &c. They used to pray in their families, and alone; some with the book, and some without. They would not swear, nor curse, nor take God's name lightly. They would go to the next parish church to hear a sermon when they had none at their own; and would read the Scriptures on the Lord's day, when others were playing. There were, where I lived, about the number of two or three families in twenty, which, by the rest, were called Puritans, and derided as hypocrites and precisians, that would take on them to be holy; yet hardly one, if any, of them ever scrupled conformity; and they were godly, conformable ministers whom they went from home to hear. These ministers being the ablest preachers, and men of serious piety, were also the objects of vulgar obloquy, as Puritans and precisians.

"This being the condition of the vulgar where I was, when I came into the acquaintance of many persons of honour, and power, and reputed learning, I found the same seriousness in religion as in some few before described, and the same daily scorn of that sort of men in others, but differently clothed; for these would talk more bitterly, but yet with a greater show of reason, against the other, than the ignorant country people did. They would, also, sometimes talk of certain opinions in religion, and some of them would use part of the common prayer in their houses; others of them would swear, though seldom, and these small oaths, and lived soberly and civilly. But serious talk of God or godliness, or that which tended to search and reform the heart and life, and prepare for the life to come, they would at least be very averse to hear, if not deride as puritanical.

"This being the fundamental division, some of those who were called Puritans and hypocrites, for not being hypocrites, but serious in the religion they professed, would sometimes get together; and, as drunkards and sporters would meet to drink and play, they would, in some very few places where there were many of them, meet after sermon on the Lord's days, to repeat the sermon, and sing a psalm, and pray. For this, and for going from their own parish churches, they were first envied by the readers and dry teachers, whom they sometimes went from, and next prosecuted by apparitors, officials, archdeacons, commissaries, chancellors, and other episcopal instruments. In former times there had been divers presbyterian Nonconformists, who earnestly pleaded for parish discipline:

to subdue whom, divers canons were made, which served the turn against these meetings of the conformable Puritans, and against going from their own parish churches, though the old Presbyterians were dead, and very few succeeded them. About as many Nonconformists as counties were left; and those few stuck most at subscription and ceremonies, which were the hinderance of their ministry, and but few of them studied, or understood, the Presbyterian or Independent, disciplinary causes.

"But when these conformable Puritans were thus prosecuted, it bred in them hard thoughts of bishops and their courts, as enemies to serious piety, and persecutors of that which they should promote. Suffering induced this opinion and aversion; and the ungodly rabble rejoiced at their troubles, and applauded the bishops for it, and were everywhere ready to set the apparitors on them, or to ask them, 'Are you holier and wiser than the bishops?' So that by this time the Puritans took the bishops to be captains; and the chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, officials, and apparitors, their officers, and the enemies of serious godliness; and the vicious rabble to be as their army to suppress true conscientious obedience to God, and care of men's salvation. The censured clergy and officers, on the other hand, took the censurers to be schismatics, and enemies to the church, unfit to be endured, and fit to be prosecuted with reproach and punishment; so that the said Puritans took it to be but the common enmity that, since Cain's days, hath been in the world, between the serpent's and the woman's seed. When the persons of bishops, chancellors, officials, apparitors, &c., were come under such repute, it is easy to believe what would be said against their office. And the more the bishops thought to cure this by punishment, the more they increased the opinion that they were persecuting enemies of godliness, and the captains of the profane.

"When such sinful beginnings had prepared men, the civil contentions arising, those called Puritans, were mostly against that side to which they saw the bishops and their neighbours enemies. And they were for their punishment the more, because it seemed desirable to reform the bishops, and restore the liberty of those whom they prosecuted for the manner of their serving God. Yet they desired, wherever I was, to have lived peaceably at home; but the drunkards and rabble that formerly hated them, when they saw the war beginning, grew enraged: for if a man did but pray and sing a psalm in his house, they would cry,

'Down with the Roundheads!' (a word then new made for them,) and put them in fear of sudden violence. Afterwards they brought the King's soldiers to plunder them of their goods, which made them fain to run into holes to hide their persons: and when their goods were gone, and their lives in continual danger, they were forced to fly for food and shelter. To go among those that hated them, they durst not, when they could not dwell among such at home. And thus thousands ran into the parliament's garrisons, and, having nothing there to live upon, became soldiers."[1]

The circumstances which led to an open rupture between the king and his parliament, Baxter regarded as attaching blame to both parties. The people who adhered to the Parliament, he alleges, were indiscreet and clamorous, and, in some instances, proceeded to open acts of violence. Some members of the House themselves were imprudent, and carried things too high. Among these he reckoned Lord Brook and Sir Henry Vane as leaders. To these causes must be added the want of confidence in the King which was generally felt; and which arose partly from the offence they had given him, which they feared he rather dissembled than forgave; and partly from indications of His Majesty's insincerity, which they early began to discover.

On the part of the King the war was hastened by the calling up of the northern army; by the imposing of a guard upon the House of Commons; by his entering it in a passion to seize the five members; by the conduct of Lord Digby, and other cavaliers; and, above all, by the Irish massacre and rebellion, the blame of which was charged on the King and his advisers.

In a state of great exasperation, Charles left London, and erected his standard at Nottingham. The parliament assembled an army under the Earl of Essex, and thus both sides prepared to settle, by force of arms, what they could not determine in council. It is no part of the design of this work to describe the progress of this fearful contest; but a view of the rank and character of the parties which were engaged in it, may enable the reader to understand its bearings on religion.

A great part of the nobility forsook the Parliament and joined the King, particularly after the battle of Edge-Hill. Many members of the House of Commons, and a great number of the knights and men of family in the several counties, had been with him from the beginning. The tenantry of the aristocracy, also,

[1] Baxter's True History of Councils Enlarged, pp. 91—93.

and a great body of the common people, who may be said to be constitutionally loyal, were for the monarch. He had thus the two ends of the chain, but wanted the middle and connecting links. The parliament was supported by the inferior gentlemen in the country, and by the body of merchants, freeholders, and tradesmen, in all the principal towns and manufacturing districts. Among these persons, religion had much greater influence than it had either on the highest or the lowest ranks. Whatever power the love of political liberty exercised, it was the apprehension of danger to religion, which chiefly roused them and filled the army of the parliament. The body of the persons who were called Puritans, and precisians; and who discovered by their conduct that they were in earnest on the subject of religion, adhered to the cause of the parliament. On the other hand, the gentry, who were not so precise—who scrupled not at an oath; who loved gaming, plays, and drinking; and the ministers and people, who were for the King's book, and for dancing and recreations on the Lord's day; who went to church to hear common prayer, and relished a sermon which lashed the Puritans—these for the most part opposed the parliament.

The difference between the two parties was very strongly marked, it arose from the opposite characters which they sustained, and accounts for many of the events which occurred. "There is somewhat," says Baxter, "in the nature of all worldly men which makes them earnestly desirous of riches and honours in the world. They that value these things most will seek them; and they that seek them are more likely to find them than those that despise them. He who takes the world and preferment for his interest, will estimate and choose all means accordingly; and, where the world predominates, gain goes for godliness, and serious religion, which would mortify their sin, is their greatest enemy. Yet, conscience must be quieted, and reputation preserved; which cannot be done without some religion. Therefore, such a religion is necessary to them, as is consistent with a worldly mind: which outside formality, lip service, and hypocrisy, are; but seriousness, sincerity, and spirituality, are not.

"On the other side, there is that in the new nature of a believer, which inclineth him to things above, and causeth him to look at worldly grandeur and riches as things more dangerous than desirable. He is dead to the world, and the world to him, by the cross of Christ. No wonder, therefore, if few such at-

tain to greatness, or ever arrive at much preferment on earth. They are more fearful of displeasing God than all the world, and cannot stretch their consciences, or turn aside when the interest or will of man requireth. As before, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; so it was here. The rabble of the great and little vulgar did every where hate those that reproved their sin, and condemned them by a holy life. This ignorant rabble, hearing also that the bishops were against the Puritans, were the more emboldened against them. They cried up the bishops on this account, and because they loved that mode of worship which they found most consistent with their ignorance and carelessness. Thus, the interests of the bishops, and of the profane people of England, seemed to be twisted together."

The majority of the Nonconformists and serious people were opposed to the prelates, and those who espoused their side; because the high-church party derided and abused them; because so many scandalous and incompetent men were among the conforming clergy; because the piety and talents of the Nonconformist ministers, many of whom had been silenced, were more distinguished than those of the other party; because they liked a scriptural mode of worship better than the liturgy, though they did not deem it unlawful; because the bishops' courts made fasting and prayer more perilous than swearing and drunkenness; because they regarded the bishops as supporters of the book of sports, and discouraged afternoon lectures even by conforming ministers; because when they saw bowing at the altar and other innovations introduced, they knew not where they would end; and, because they saw that the bishops approved of ship money and other encroachments on their civil rights.

These were the true and principal reasons why so great a number of those persons who were counted most religious fell in with the parliament; and why the generality of the serious, diligent preachers joined it; not taking arms themselves, but supporting it by their influence and their presence. The King's party, indeed, alleged that the preachers stirred up the war; but this is far from correct. It is true, they discovered their dislike to many corruptions in church and state; and were glad that the parliament attempted a reformation of them. But it was conforming ministers who did even this; for the bishops had ejected most of the nonconforming ministers long before. Those who made up the Westminster assembly, and who were

the honour of the parliamentary party through the land, were almost all such as had till then conformed.

Names of contempt and reproach, as might be expected, were plentifully used on both sides at the beginning and during the continuance of this unnatural war. Rebels and roundheads were the common appellations bestowed on the parliamentary party, in addition to Puritan and formalist.[k] Malignants, cavaliers, dam-mes, were the designations used or retaliated by the other.[l]

Reasons, many and various, were assigned for the lawfulness of the war by both parties; and men generally adopted that side to which their interests or their feelings chiefly inclined. Those who opposed the war on the part of the Commons, were of different sentiments. Some thought *no king* might be resisted; others that *our king* might not be resisted, because we had sworn allegiance and submission to him; and a third party, which granted that he might be resisted in some cases, contended that a sufficient case had not been made out. They maintained that the law gave the king the power of the militia, which the parliament sought to wrest from him; that the commons began the war by permitting tumults to deprive the members of their liberty, and to insult the king; that the members of parliament are themselves subjects, and bound by their oath of allegiance; that it is not lawful for subjects to defend religion or reformation against their sovereign by force; that it is contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, the practice of the ancient Christians, and the injunctions of Scripture, to resist the higher powers; that the King was falsely accused as if he were about to destroy liberty, religion, and parliaments; that the allegations of Papists respecting the rebellious tendency of Protestantism were supported by this war; that it proceeded from impatience and distrust of God; and that religion is best promoted by patient sufferings.

[k] The term *Roundhead* was bestowed either because the Puritans usually wore short hair, and the royal party long; or because some say, the Queen, at Strafford's trial, asked, in reference to Prynne, who that *round-headed* man was, who spoke so strongly. The device on the standard of Colonel Cook, a parliamentary officer, was a man in armour cutting off the corner of a square cap with a sword. His motto was *Muto quadrata rotundis.*

[l] Fuller's derivation of *Malignant* is in his usual witty style; "The deduction thereof being disputable; whether from bad fire, or bad fuel, *malus ignis*, or *malum lignum*: but this is sure, betwixt both, the name made a great combustion."

Some of these reasons are plausible, and others have considerable force; they are partly derived from the constitution of England, and partly from the nature and obligations of religion. To all of them the writers on the side of the parliament replied at great length; and justified the resistance of the people to the arbitrary measures of government, on other and unanswerable grounds. Instead of stating these at length, I shall here give the reflections of Baxter, which embrace the strength of them, in his own words.

"For my own part, I freely confess that I was not judicious enough in politics and law to decide this controversy. Being astonished at the Irish massacre, and persuaded fully both of the parliament's good endeavours for reformation, and of their *real danger*, my judgment of the *main cause*, much swayed my judgment in the matter of the wars; and the arguments *à fine, et à natura, et necessitate*, which common wits are capable of discerning, did too far incline my judgment in the cause of the war, before I well understood the arguments from our particular laws. The consideration of the quality of the persons also, that sided for each cause, did greatly work with me, and more than it should have done. I verily thought that if that which a judge in court saith is law, must go for law to the subject, as to the decision of that cause, though the king send his broad seal against it; then that which the parliament saith *is law*, is law to the subject about the dangers of the commonwealth, whatever it be in itself.

"I make no doubt that both parties were to blame, as it commonly falleth out in most wars and contentions; and I will not be he that will justify either of them. I doubt not but the headiness and rashness of the younger inexperienced sort of religious people, made many parliament men and ministers overgo themselves to keep pace with those Hotspurs. No doubt but much indiscretion appeared, and worse than indiscretion in the tumultuous petitioners; and much sin was committed in the dishonouring of the king, and in the uncivil language against the bishops and liturgy of the church. But these things came chiefly from the sectarian, separating spirit, which blew the coals among foolish apprentices. And as the sectaries increased, so the insolence increased. One or two in the House, and five or six ministers that came from Holland, and a few relicts of the Brownists that were scattered in the city, did drive on others,

and sowed the seeds which afterward spread over all the land.[m]

"But I then thought, whoever was faulty, the people's liberties and safety should not be forfeited. I thought that all the subjects were not guilty of all the faults of king or parliament when they defended them: yea, that if both their causes had been bad as against each other; yet that the subjects should adhere to that party which most secured the welfare of the nation, and might defend the land under their conduct without owning all their cause. And herein I was then so zealous, that I thought it was a great sin for men that were able to defend their country, to be neuters. And I have been tempted since to think that I was a more competent judge upon the place, when all things were before our eyes, than I am in the review of those days and actions so many years after, when distance disadvantageth the apprehension." [n]

It is evident from these statements, that Baxter was a decided friend to the parliamentary cause. The reasons which influenced his judgment were those which probably guided the determination of the great body of persons who espoused that side, in the momentous controversy which then divided the country. Many of those who were incapable of judging in the numerous political questions and altercations, which the grand subject involved, were well enough qualified to form an opinion respecting the substantial merits of the difference between the king and the people. The love of religion, and the desire of liberty, were the great inspiring principles. The resistance which they met with only increased their vigour, and thus in-

[m] It is very singular that Baxter should attribute so much evil to the dissenting brethren of the Westminster assembly, and the sectaries of whom they were the reputed leaders, especially after his own account of the former state of things which we have given. The civil wars produced or occasioned the sects, not the sects the wars. The long parliament had taken some of its strongest measures before the five Independent ministers returned to England from Holland. A good while must have elapsed after their return before their influence could extend far; and without violent and unreasonable opposition to their fair and moderate request for a toleration, their influence at no time would have been great. Compared with many of their opponents, both their language and their temper were moderate; and it might be easy to show that the exaggerated lamentations and insulting abuse of their adversaries were calculated to produce, and actually did produce, a worse effect on the country than anything done by the Independents either in or out of parliament. On this subject further particulars will be furnished in a subsequent part of this work.

[n] Life, part i. p. 39.

sured their success. Though they were guilty of occasional evils, and produced temporary confusion, the great objects which they contemplated were never lost sight of, and the result of the struggle was in a high degree glorious.

We have already glanced at the trouble Baxter experienced at Kidderminster, from the ignorant rabble, which disliked his preaching and his strictness. Towards the end of 1642, the heat of the parties became so great that he was exposed to considerable danger. The king's declarations were read in the market-place, and a country gentleman, who officiated on the occasion, stopped at sight of Baxter, and called out "There goes a traitor." The commission of array was set on foot, which increased the rage of the rioters. "Down with the round-heads," became the watch-word; and knocking down every person whose hair was short and his dress respectable immediately followed. In consequence of these things, Baxter was advised to withdraw for a short time from the scene of his labours. The county of Worcester was devoted to the king; so that no one who was known to be for the parliament could then be of service.

CHAPTER III.

1642—1646.

Baxter goes to Gloucester—Returns to Kidderminster—Visits Alcester—Battle of Edghill—Residence in Coventry—Battle of Naseby—State of the Parliamentary Army—Consults the Ministers about going into it—Becomes Chaplain to Colonel Whalley's regiment—Opinions of the Soldiers—Disputes with them—Battle of Langport—Wicked Report of an Occurrence at this place—The Army retires to Bridgewater and Bristol—Becomes ill—Various Occurrences in the Army—Chief Impediments to his Success in it—Cromwell—Harrison—Berry—Advised by the Ministers to continue in it—Goes to London on account of his Health—Joins the Army in Worcestershire—Attacked with violent Bleeding—Leaves the Army—Entertained by Lady Rous—Remarks on his Views of the Army, and conduct in it.

The immediate cause of Baxter's withdrawment from Kidderminster was a violent attack on his life, and on that of the churchwarden, by a mob, excited by a parliamentary order for defacing images of the Trinity in churches, and removing crucifixes; to which they considered Baxter a party, though the execution of the order had not been attempted. This brutal outrage shows the ignorant and degraded state of the people. On leaving Kidderminster, he went to Gloucester, where he found the people civil and religious, as different from those of the former place as if they had lived under another government. Here he remained for a month, during which many political pamphlets were published on both sides. Here, also, he first witnessed the contentions between the ministers and the Baptists, and other sects, which then frequently took place in the country. A public arena was chosen; judges, or moderators, were appointed; champions on each side bade defiance: while the public were called to witness the religious tournament, and to applaud the victor. Truth was generally claimed by both parties; but if the justice of the cause depended on the spirit and weapons of the champions, in most instances she would have disclaimed both. About a dozen young men, in Gloucester, of considerable parts, had been re-baptised, and laboured, as was very natural, to draw

others after them. The minister of the place, Mr. Winnel, being hot and impatient, excited rather than calmed them. He wrote a book against them, which produced little effect on the Baptists, and led the people of the country to blame him for his violence and asperity. This was the commencement, Baxter says, of much evil at Gloucester.

When he had remained in it about a month, his friends at Kidderminster wished him to return, which he accordingly did; but, after continuing a short time, he found the state of matters so little improved, the fury of the rabble and of the king's soldiers being still great, that he was under the necessity of withdrawing again. The war was now in active operation in that part of the country; the main army of the king, commanded by Prince Rupert, and that of the parliament, under the Earl of Essex, occupying the county of Worcester. After noticing some petty skirmishes, he gives the following account of the battle of Edghill, and his subsequent proceedings:

"Upon the Lord's day, October 23, 1642, I preached at Alcester for my reverend friend, Mr. Samuel Clark. As I was preaching, the people heard the cannon play, and perceived that the armies were engaged. When the sermon was done, in the afternoon, the report was more audible, which made us all long to hear of the success. About sun-setting, many troops fled through the town, and told us that all was lost on the parliament's side; and that the carriages were taken, and the waggons plundered, before they came away. The townsmen sent a messenger to Stratford-on-Avon, to know the truth. About four o'clock in the morning he returned, and told us that Prince Rupert wholly routed the left wing of the Earl of Essex's army; but while his men were plundering the waggons, the main body and the right wing routed the rest of the king's army; took his standard, but lost it again; killed General, the Earl of Lindsay, and took his son prisoner: that few persons of quality, on the side of the parliament, were lost, and no nobleman but Lord St. John, eldest son to the Earl of Bolingbroke: that the loss of the left wing happened through the treachery of Sir Faithful Fortescue, major to Lord Fielding's regiment of horse, who turned to the king when he should have charged: and that the victory was obtained principally by Colonel Hollis's regiment of London red-coats, and the Earl of Essex's own regiment and life guard, where Sir Philip Stapleton, Sir Arthur Haselrigge, and Colonel Urrey, did much,

"Next morning, being desirous to see the field, I went to Edghill, and found the Earl of Essex, with the remaining part of his army, keeping the ground, and the king's army facing them upon the hill about a mile off. There were about a thousand dead bodies in the field between them; and many I suppose were buried before. Neither of the armies moving towards each other, the king's army presently drew off towards Banbury, and then to Oxford. The Earl of Essex's went back to provide for the wounded, and refresh themselves at Warwick Castle, belonging to Lord Brook."[n]

"For myself, I knew not what course to take. To live at home, I was uneasy; but especially now, when soldiers on one side or other would be frequently among us, and we must still be at the mercy of every furious beast that would make a prey of us. I had neither money nor friends: I knew not who would receive me in any place of safety; nor had I any thing to satisfy them for my diet and entertainment. Hereupon I was persuaded, by one that was with me, to go to Coventry, where an old acquaintance, Mr. Simon King, was minister; so thither I went, with a purpose to stay there till one side or other had got the victory, and the war was ended: for so wise in matters of war was I, and all the country beside, that we commonly supposed that a very few days or weeks, by one other battle, would end the wars. Here I stayed at Mr. King's a month; but the war was then as far from being likely to end as before.

"While I was thinking what course to take in this necessity, the committee and governor of the city desired me to stay with them, and lodge in the governor's house, and preach to the soldiers. The offer suited well with my necessities; but I resolved that I would not be chaplain to a regiment, nor take a commission: yet, if the mere preaching of a sermon once or twice a week to the garrison would satisfy them, I would accept of the offer, till I could go home again. Here, accordingly, I lived in the governor's house, followed my studies as quietly as in a time of peace, for about a year; preaching once a week to the soldiers, and once, on the Lord's day, to the people; taking nothing from either but my diet." [o]

[n] Baxter's account of this battle is substantially the same with Clarendon's, though the latter endeavours to show that the victory was rather on the side of the king than of the parliament. The consequences which followed, however, afford convincing proof that the advantages were on the side of the parliament.

[o] Life, part i. pp. 43, 44.

At the end of this period, the war, so far from being terminated, had spread almost over the whole country. In most of the counties there were garrisons and troops belonging to both parties, which caused conflicts in every quarter. There were few parishes in which blood, at some time or other, was not shed; so general and determined was the hostility of the parties to each other. Baxter removed from Coventry to Shropshire for about two months; during which time, he was near some of the skirmishes which then almost daily took place. Having got his father relieved from prison at Lillshull, he returned to Coventry, and spent another year in his old employment, studying the Scriptures and preaching to the army.

In his audience in this place, he mentions that there were many godly and judicious persons. Among these were, Sir Richard Skeffington, Colonel Godfrey Bosville, Mr. Mackworth, and Mr. George Abbot, known by his Paraphrase on the Book of Job. There were also about thirty worthy ministers, who had fled to Coventry for safety, from the soldiers and popular fury, though they never meddled in the wars: Mr. Richard Vines, Mr. Anthony Burgess, Mr. Burdall, Mr. Brumskill, Dr. Bryan, Dr. Grew, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Cradock, Mr. Morton of Bewdley, Mr. Diamond, old Mr. Overton, and many more.

At Coventry, Baxter took the covenant himself, and gave it to another, of which he afterwards bitterly repented. He also publicly defended it against a production of Sir Francis Nethersole's. He then supposed that it was only intended as a test for garrisons and soldiers, and did not anticipate that it would afterwards be made a test for the magistracy and ministry throughout the land; though he acknowledges he might have foreseen this, had he attended to its tenor. Here, also, he openly declared himself for the parliament; for which, in his 'Penitent Confessions,'[p] he assigns thirty-two reasons; with which it is unnecessary here to trouble the reader.

"The garrison of Coventry," he says, "consisted half of citizens, and half of countrymen. The latter were such as had been forced from their own dwellings, and were the most religious men of the parts round about. One or two persons who came among us from New England, of Sir Henry Vane's party, and one Anabaptist tailor, had almost troubled all the garrison, by infecting the honest soldiers with their opinions. But they

[p] Penitent Confessions, p. 23.

found not the success in Coventry which they had done in Cromwell's army. In public I was fain to preach over all the controversies against the Anabaptists first, and then against the separatists. In private, some of my Worcester neighbours, and many of the foot soldiers, were able to baffle both separatists, Anabaptists, and Antinomians, and so kept all the garrison sound. On this, the Anabaptists sent to Bedford, for one Benjamin Cox, an old minister of their persuasion, and no contemptible scholar, the son of a bishop; and he and I had first a dispute by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing. In conclusion, about a dozen poor townsmen were carried away; but the soldiers, and the rest of the city, were kept sound from all infection of sectaries and dividers."[q] Mr. Cox was desired to depart the first time; but coming down again and refusing to leave the city, the committee imprisoned him. Some ascribed this to Baxter; but he declares that instead of using his influence to put him in, he employed it to get him out.[r] Be this as it may, a Baptist church was then planted in Coventry, which has subsisted ever since. Imprisoning heretics will never check or destroy heresy; and preaching controversies, is not the most useful method either of converting unbelievers or establishing saints.

The detail which Baxter gives in his own life of the subsequent progress of the civil war, which so long fearfully distracted the country, is too extended and minute to admit of being fully inserted in this place. Many of the scenes which he notices, are better described by others who witnessed them, and with whose description the generality of readers are now well acquainted. More dependence also can be placed on his statements than on his reasonings; on his record of what he saw, than on his hearsay reports. But as he himself acted with the parliamentary army for a considerable time, the account which he gives of what fell under his own observation, and of his personal conduct, is frequently important and interesting, and may always be received with the greatest confidence. To these things, I shall, therefore, confine my narrative. He thus describes the circumstances which led to his joining the army, his employment whilst in it, and some of the events which happened during his connexion with it.

"Naseby being not far from Coventry, where I was, and the noise of the victory being loud in our ears, and I having two or

[q] Life, part i. p. 46.

[r] Baxter on 'Infant Baptism,' Preface.

three who had been my intimate friends in Cromwell's army, whom I had not seen for above two years, I was desirous of seeing whether they were dead or alive; so to Naseby Field I went two days after the fight, and thence by the army's quarters before Leicester, to seek my acquaintance.* When I found them, I staid with them a night; and understood from them the state of the army much better than ever I had done before. We that lived quietly in Coventry kept to our old principles, and thought all others had done so too. Except a very few inconsiderable persons, we were unfeignedly for king and parliament; we believed that the war was only to save the parliament and kingdom from papists and delinquents, and to remove the dividers, that the king might again return to his parliament; and that no changes might be made in religion, but by the laws which had his free consent. We took the true happiness of king and people, church and state, to be our end, and so we understood the covenant, engaging both against Papists and schismatics; and when the Court News-book told the world of the swarms of Anabaptists in our armies, we thought it had been a mere lie, because it was not so with us, nor in any of the garrisons or county forces about us. But when I came to the army, among Cromwell's soldiers, I found a new face of things which I never dreamt of; I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both church and state. Independency and Anabaptistery were more prevalent; Antinomianism and Arminianism were equally distributed; and Thomas Moor's followers (a weaver of Wisbitch and Lynn, of excellent

* The best account which I have met with of the battle of Naseby, is in Sprigge's 'Anglia Rediviva; England's Recovery; or, the History of the Army under the conduct of Sir Thomas Fairfax,' &c. 1647. Sprigge was General Fairfax's chaplain, and personally acquainted with the scenes and transactions which he describes. The book is now very scarce; but those who think the ministers of the army were mere fanatics, would do well to consult this work. As it comprehends the very period during which Baxter was in the army, it deserves to be compared with his account of the transactions which then took place. Sprigge's means of information must have been superior to Baxter's, as he was immediately connected with the general himself; yet I am not aware of any important difference between them in the statements of facts; though they do not entirely agree, as is noticed in a subsequent page, in their views of the character of the army. I should suppose that Baxter did not occupy any very conspicuous place in the army, as his name is never mentioned by Sprigge. Clement Walker calls Sprigge's 'Anglia,' the 'Legend, or Romance, of this Army,' and insinuates that it was the production of Nath. Fiennes, second son to Lord Say: but this is probably one of the legends of that mendacious writer.

parts) had made some shifts to join these two extremes together.

"Abundance of the common troopers and many of the officers, I found to be honest, sober, orthodox men; others were tractable, ready to hear the truth, and of upright intentions. But a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed sectaries had got into the highest places, and were Cromwell's chief favourites; and by their very heat and activity, bore down the rest, or carried them along with them. These were the soul of the army, though much fewer in number than the rest, being indeed not one to twenty in it; their strength being in the General's, in Whalley's and in Rich's regiments of horse, and among the new-placed officers in many of the rest.

"I perceived that they took the king for a tyrant and an enemy, and really intended absolutely to master him, or to ruin him. They thought if they might fight against him, they might also kill or conquer him; and if they might conquer, they were never more to trust him further than he was in their power. They thought it folly to irritate him either by war or contradiction in parliament, if so be they must needs take him for their king, and trust him with their lives when they had thus displeased him. 'What, were the lords of England,' said they, 'but William the Conqueror's colonels; or the barons, but his majors; or the knights, but his captains!' They plainly showed that they thought God's providence would cast the trust of religion and the kingdom upon them as conquerers; they made nothing of all the most wise and godly in the armies and garrisons, that were not of their way. *Per fas aut nefas*, By law or without it, they were resolved to take down, not only bishops, and liturgy, and ceremonies, but all who did withstand them. They were far from thinking of a moderate episcopacy, or of any healing method between the episcopalians and the presbyterians; they most honoured the separatists, anabaptists, and antinomians; but Cromwell and his council took on them to join themselves to no party, but to be for the liberty of all. Two sorts, I perceived, they did so commonly and bitterly speak against, that it was done in mere design, to make them odious to the soldiers, and to all the land; and these were the Scots, and with them all presbyterians, but especially the ministers; whom they called priests, and priestbyters, dryvines, and the dissemblymen, and such like. The committees of the several counties, and all the soldiers that were under them, that were not of their

mind and way, were the other objects of their displeasure. Some orthodox captains of the army partly acquainted me with all this, and I heard much of it from the mouths of the leading sectaries themselves. This struck me to the very heart, and made me fear that England was lost by those that it had taken for its chief friends.

"Upon this I began to blame other ministers and myself. I saw that it was the ministers that had lost all, by forsaking the army, and betaking themselves to an easier and quieter way of life. When the Earl of Essex went out first, each regiment had an able preacher; but at Edghill fight, almost all of them went home; and as the sectaries increased, they were the more averse to go into the army. It is true, I believe now, that they had little invitation; and it is true, that they could look for little welcome, and great contempt and opposition, beside all other difficulties and dangers; but it is as true, that their worth and labour, in a patient, self-denying way, would probably have preserved most of the army, and have defeated the contrivances of the sectaries, saved the king, the parliament, and the land. And if it had brought reproach upon themselves from the malicious, who called them *Military Levites*, the good which they had done would have wiped off that blot, much better than the contrary course would have done.

"I reprehended myself also, who had before rejected an invitation from Cromwell, when he lay at Cambridge with that famous troop with which he began his army. His officers purposed to make their troop a gathered church, and they all subscribed an invitation to me to be their pastor, and sent it me to Coventry. I sent them a denial, reproving their attempt, and told them wherein my judgment was against the lawfulness and convenience of their way, and so I heard no more from them; but afterwards meeting Cromwell at Leicester, he expostulated with me for denying them. These very men that then invited me to be their pastor, were the men that afterwards headed much of the army, and some of them were the forwardest in all our changes; which made me wish that I had gone among them, however it had been interpreted; for then all the fire was in one spark.

"When I had informed myself, to my sorrow, of the state of the army, Captain Evanson (one of my orthodox informers) desired me yet to come to their regiment, which was the most religious, most valiant, and most successful of all the

army; but in as much danger as any one whatsoever. I was unwilling to leave my studies, and friends, and quietness, at Coventry, to go into an army so contrary to my judgment; but I thought the public good commanded me, and so I gave him some encouragement. Whereupon he told his colonel (Whalley), who also was orthodox in religion, but engaged by kindred and interest to Cromwell; who invited me to be chaplain to his regiment. I told him I would take but a day's time to deliberate, and would send him an answer or else come to him.

"As soon as I came home to Coventry, I called together an assembly of ministers; Dr. Bryan, Dr. Grew, and many others. I told them the sad news of the corruption of the army, and that I thought all we had valued was likely to be endangered by them; seeing this army having first conquered at York, and now at Naseby, and having left the king no visible army but Goring's, the fate of the whole kingdom was likely to follow the disposition and interest of the conquerors. We had sworn to be true to the king and his heirs in the oath of allegiance. All our soldiers here think that the parliament is faithful to the king, and have no other purpose themselves. If the king and parliament, church and state, be ruined by those men, and we look on and do nothing to hinder it, how are we true to our allegiance and to the covenant, which bindeth us to defend the king, and to be against schism, as well as against Popery and profaneness? For my part, said I, I know that my body is so weak, that it is likely to hazard my life to be among them; I expect their fury should do little less than rid me out of the way; and I know one man cannot do much among them: but yet, if your judgment take it to be my duty, I will venture my life; perhaps some other minister may be drawn in, and then some more of the evil may be prevented.

"The ministers finding my own judgment for it, and being moved with the cause, did unanimously give their judgment for my going. Hereupon, I went straight to the committee, and told them that I had an invitation to the army, and desired their consent to go. They consulted awhile, and then left it wholly to the governor, saying, that if he consented they should not hinder me. It fell out that Colonel Barker, the governor, was just then to be turned out, as a member of parliament, by the self-denying vote. And one of his companions (Colonel Willoughby) was to be colonel and governor in his place. Hereupon Colonel Barker was content, in his discontent, that I

should go out with him, that he might be missed the more; and so gave me his consent.

"I then sent word to Colonel Whalley that, to-morrow God willing, I would come to him. As soon as this was done, the elected governor was much displeased; and the soldiers were so much offended with the committee for consenting to my going, that the committee all met again in the night, and sent for me, and told me I must not go. I told them that, by their consent, I had promised, and therefore must go. They told me that the soldiers were ready to mutiny against them, and they could not satisfy them, and therefore I must stay. I told them that I would not have promised, if they had not consented, though, being no soldier or chaplain to the garrison, but only preaching to them, I took myself to be a free man, and I could not break my word, when I had promised by their consent. They seemed to deny their consent, and said they only referred me to the governor. In a word, they were so angry with me, that I was fain to tell them all the truth of my motives and design, what a case I perceived the army to be in, and that I was resolved to do my best against it. I knew not, till afterwards, that Colonel William Purefoy, a parliament-man, one of the chief of them, was a confident of Cromwell's; and as soon as I had spoken what I did of the army, magisterially he answereth me, 'Let me hear no more of that: if Nol Cromwell should hear any soldier but speak such a word, he would cleave his crown: you do them wrong. It is not so.' I told him what he would not hear, he should not hear from me: but I would perform my word though he seemed to deny his. And so I parted with those that had been my very great friends, in some displeasure. The soldiers, however, threatened to stop the gates and keep me in; but, being honest, understanding men, I quickly satisfied the leaders of them by a private intimation of my reasons and resolutions, and some of them accompanied me on my way.

"As soon as I came to the army, Oliver Cromwell coolly bade me welcome, and never spake one word to me more while I was there; nor once, all that time, vouchsafed me an opportunity to come to the head-quarters, where the councils and meetings of the officers were; so that most of my design was thereby frustrated. His secretary gave out that there was a reformer come to the army to undeceive them, and to save church and state, with some such other jeers; by which I perceived that

all I had said the night before to the committee, had come to Cromwell before me, I believe by Colonel Purefoy's means: but Colonel Whalley welcomed me, and was the worse thought of for it by the rest of the cabal.

"Here I set myself, from day to day, to find out the corruptions of the soldiers, and to discourse and dispute them out of their mistakes, both religious and political. My life among them was a daily contending against seducers, and gently arguing with the more tractable; but another kind of warfare I had than theirs.

"I found that many honest men, of weak judgments and little acquaintance with such matters, had been seduced into a disputing vein, and made it too much of their religion to talk for this opinion and for that; sometimes for state democracy, and sometimes for church democracy; sometimes against forms of prayer, and sometimes against infant baptism, which yet some of them did maintain; sometimes against set times of prayer, and against the tying of ourselves to any duty before the Spirit move us; and sometimes about free-grace and free-will, and all the points of Antinomianism and Arminianism. So that I was almost always, when I had opportunity, disputing with one or other of them; sometimes for our civil government, and sometimes for church order and government; sometimes for infant baptism, and oft against Antinomianism, and the contrary extreme. But their most frequent and vehement disputes were for liberty of conscience, as they called it; that is, that the civil magistrate had nothing to do to determine any thing in matters of religion, by constraint or restraint; but every man might not only hold, but preach and do, in matters of religion, what he pleased: that the civil magistrate hath nothing to do but with civil things, to keep the peace, protect the church's liberties, &c.[t]

[t] It is very interesting to find that, amidst all the heresies which infected the army, of which Baxter speaks so strongly, the heresy, as it was then deemed, of religious liberty, so extensively prevailed. It is a pleasing feature in the character of the army, that it contended more vehemently for this than for any other point of doctrine or form of religion. The fanatical Baptists and Independents of the parliamentary forces, maintained, two hundred years ago, the doctrine to which the enlightened parliament of George the Fourth, in the years 1828 and 1829, was brought to submit; not by practised politicians, or spiritual lords, but by a man accustomed from his earliest youth to the use of arms, and the arbitrary command of an army. Among soldiers, religious freedom was first fiercely contended for; and by a soldier its

"I found that one-half almost, of the religious party among them, were such as were either orthodox, or but very slightly touched with heterodoxy; and almost another half were honest men, that stepped further into the contending way than they could well get out of again, but who, with competent help, might be recovered. There were a few fiery, self-conceited men among them, who kindled the rest, and made all the noise and bustle, and carried about the army as they pleased: for the greatest part of the common soldiers, especially of the foot, were ignorant men, of little religion; abundance of them were such as had been taken prisoners, or turned out of garrisons under the king, and had been soldiers in his army. These would do any thing to please their officers, and were ready instruments for the seducers, especially in their great work, which was to cry down the covenant, to villify all parish ministers, but especially the Scots and Presbyterians; for the most of the soldiers that I spoke with, never took the covenant, because it tied them to defend the king's person, and to extirpate heresy and schism.

"When I perceived that it was a few, then, who bore the bell, and did all the hurt among them, I acquainted myself with those men, and would be oft disputing with them, in the hearing of the rest. I found that they were men who had been in London, hatched up among the old separatists, and had made it all the matter of their study and religion to rail against ministers, parish churches, and Presbyterians; and who had little other knowledge, or discourse of any thing about the heart, or heaven. They were fierce with pride and self-conceitedness, and had gotten a very great conquest over their charity, both to the Episcopalians and Presbyterians: whereas many of those honest soldiers who were tainted but with some doubts about liberty of conscience or Independency, were men who would discourse of the points of sanctification and christian experience very seriously. I so far prevailed in opening the folly of these revilers and self-conceited men, as that some of them became the laughing-stock of the soldiers before I left them; and when they preached, for great preachers they were, their weakness exposed them to contempt. A great part of the mischief was done among the soldiers by pamphlets, which were abun-

triumphs have been completed. I regret that I cannot place Baxter in the front ranks of its friends.

dantly dispersed, such as Overton, Martin Mar-Priest, and more of his;[u] and some of J. Lilburn's, who was one of the preaching officers; and divers against the king, and against the ministry, and for liberty of conscience, &c. The soldiers being usually dispersed in quarters, they had such books to read, when they had none to contradict them.

"But there was yet a more dangerous party than these among the soldiers, who took the direct jesuitical way. They first most vehemently declaimed against the doctrine of election, and for the power of free-will, and all other points which are controverted between the Jesuits and Dominicans, the Arminians and Calvinists. They then as fiercely cried down our present translation of the Scriptures, and debased their authority, though they did not deny them to be divine. They cried down all our ministry, episcopal, presbyterian, and independent, and all our churches. They vilified almost all our ordinary worship; they allowed of no argument from Scripture, but what was brought in its express words; they were vehement against both king and all government, except popular: and against magistrates meddling in matters of religion. All their disputing was with as much fierceness as if they had been ready to draw their swords upon those against whom they disputed. They trusted more to policy, scorn, and power, than to argument. They would bitterly scorn me among their hearers, to prejudice them before they entered into dispute. They avoided me as much as possible; but when we did come to it, they drowned all reason in fierceness, and vehemency, and multitude of words. They greatly strove for places of command; and when any place was due by order to another that was not of their mind, they would be sure to work him out, and be ready to mutiny if they had not their will. I thought they were principled by the Jesuits, and acted all for their interest, and in their way. But the secret spring was out of sight. These were the same men that afterwards were called *Levellers*, who rose up against Crom-

[u] These pamphlets were imitations of the Martin Mar-Prelate attacks upon the bishops and clergy in the reign of Elizabeth. They partake of the severity, and, indeed, scurrility, of their prototypes, and were calculated to produce very considerable effect. They were mostly anonymous, but have been commonly ascribed to Overton, Lilburn, and persons of that class. An admirable account of Lilburn, with a very correct view of his character, is given in Godwin's History of the Commonwealth.' Overton, I suspect, was an infidel—a character then rather uncommon. He wrote a pamphlet to prove man's materiality, which made considerable noise at the time.

well, and were surprised at Burford, having then deceived and drawn to them many more. Thompson, the general of the levellers, who was slain then, was no greater a man than one of the corporals of Bethel's troop; the cornet and others being much worse than he.[x]

"Thus," concludes Baxter, "have I given you a taste of my employment in the army." For such employment he was of all men singularly qualified. Nothing but an extraordinary taste for disputation, could have disposed him to enter on, or have enabled him to continue in, such a service. Making allowance for the colouring, which the state of his mind, and the extraordinary nature of his circumstances, must have produced, it will be granted, that such another army as that of the Parliament, at this period, the world never saw before, or since. Baxter endeavours to account for its peculiar character, from the influence of a few individuals. But, whatever may be ascribed to them as the proximate causes of particular events, it is certain that other and more powerful causes formed the characters of these soldiers, and are necessary to account for the appearance which they presented. Civil and ecclesiastical oppression had goaded many to desperation; the hope and love of liberty inspired that heroic ardour, which nothing could subdue; the detection of many a false pretence, and the discovery of many important errors, by which they had long been abused and deluded, induced suspicions and doubts, and instigated to a licentious freedom of inquiry. Authority had lost all its weight; and truth, stripped of all adventitious ornament and recommendation, seemed clothed with irresistible charms. The period of darkness and the reign of terror were regarded to have passed away; and the dawn of peace, liberty, and religion, all over the the world, was supposed to have commenced. Baxter's exertions to stem the progress of these men, however well-meant, were like attempts to check a volcano, by throwing stones into the crater; or to resist the mountain torrent by a wicker embankment. The tempest which had been long collecting at length burst with tremendous fury; but, though, for a time, it scattered dismay and desolation all around, it finally cleared the political and religious atmosphere, and rendered it capable of being breathed by free men and Christians.

As Baxter's account of the army is drawn up under the influ-

[x] Life, part i. pp. 50—54.

ence of strong feeling, arising probably from the disappointment he experienced in his attempts to cool down their ardour, and reconcile their theological quarrels, it may be proper to present to the reader the character of these soldiers, as drawn by another who was very intimate with them, and whose testimony is entitled to much respect.

"The officers of this army," says Sprigge, "were such as knew little more of war than our own unhappy wars had taught them, except some few. Indeed, I may say this, they were better Christians than soldiers; wiser in faith than in fighting; and could believe a victory sooner than contrive it; yet were they as wise in soldiery as the little time and experience they had could make them. Many of the officers, with their men, were much engaged in prayer and reading the Scriptures; an exercise that soldiers, till of late, have used but little; and thus they went on and prospered. Men conquer better as they are saints than soldiers; and in the counties where they came, they left something of God as well as of Cæsar behind them; something of piety as well as pay.

"The army was, what by example and justice, kept in good order, both in respect of itself and of the country; nor was it their pay that pacified them; for, had they not had more civility than money, things had not been so fairly managed. There were many of them differing in opinion, yet not in action or business; they all agreed to preserve the kingdom; they prospered more in their amity than uniformity. Whatever their opinions were, they plundered none with them, they betrayed none with them, nor disobeyed the state with them; and they were more visibly pious and peaceable in their opinions than those we call more orthodox."[y]

This is the testimony of one whom Baxter would perhaps have called a sectary; but he was chaplain to the good orthodox Presbyterian, General Fairfax, and could not, therefore, have been very wild. Besides, his whole account is characterised by sobriety, and accounts better for the conduct and success of the army, than some parts of Baxter's description. It is a duty, while recording events, and describing characters as they really existed, to embrace every fair opportunity of vindicating the brave and, I must call them, enlightened men, who fought the battle of England's liberties, and to whose memories a large debt of gratitude still remains undischarged.

[y] Sprigge's 'Anglia Rediviva,' pp. 324, 325.

"As soon as I came to the army," Baxter proceeds, "it marched speedily down into the west, because the king had no army left there but the Lord Goring's, and it would not suffer the fugitives of Naseby-fight to come thither to strengthen them. We came quickly down to Somerton, when Goring was at Langport; which lying upon the river, Massey was sent to keep him in on the further side, while Fairfax attended him on this side, with his army. One day they faced each other, and did nothing; the next day they came to their ground again. Betwixt the two armies was a narrow lane, which went between some meadows in a bottom, and a small brook crossed the lane with a narrow bridge. Goring planted two or three small pieces at the head of the lane to keep the passage, and there placed his best horse; so that none could come to them, but over that narrow bridge, and up that steep lane, upon the mouth of those pieces. After many hours facing each other, Fairfax's great ordnance affrighting, more than hurting, Goring's men, and some musqueteers being sent to drive them from under the hedges, at last Cromwell bid Whalley send three of his troops to charge the enemy, and he sent three of the General's own regiment to second them; all being of Cromwell's own regiment. Whalley sent Major Bethel, Captain Evanson, and Captain Grove, to charge; Major Desborough, with another troop or two, came after; as they could go but one or two abreast over the bridge. By the time Bethel and Evanson, with their troops were got up to the top of the lane, they met with a select party of Goring's best horse, and charged them at sword's point, whilst you would count three or four hundred, and then put them to retreat. In the flight they pursued them too far to the main body; for the dust was so great, being in the very hottest time of summer, that they who were in it could scarce see each other; but I, who stood over them upon the brow of the hill, saw all. When they saw themselves upon the face of Goring's army, they fled back in haste, and by the time they came to the lane again, Captain Grove's troop was ready to relieve them, and Desborough behind him. They then rallied again, and the five or six troops together marched towards all Goring's army; but before they came to the front, I could discern the rear begin to run, and so beginning in the rear, they all fled before they endured any charge; nor was there a blow struck that day, but by Bethel's and Evanson's troops, on that side, and a few musqueteers in the hedges. Goring's army fled to Bridgewater; and very few of

them were either killed or taken in the fight or the pursuit. I happened to be next to Major Harrison as soon as the flight began, and heard him with a loud voice break forth into the praises of God with fluent expressions, as if he had been in a rapture."[z]

It was while at Langport, that a remarkable circumstance took place, which continued for a long time to be privately circulated to the great prejudice of Baxter's character. Will the reader believe that he was actually charged with killing a man in cold blood with his own hand! At last it was publicly laid to his charge by Major Jennings himself, in the form of an affidavit, and published by Vernon, in the preface to his life of Dr. Heylin. The following is a copy of this extraordinary document, with Baxter's answer to it:

"Mr. Baxter may be pleased to call to mind," says that inveterate enemy of the Nonconformists, "what was done to one Major Jennings the last war, in that fight that was between Lyndsel and Langford, in the county of Salop; where the king's party having unfortunately the worst of the day, the poor man was stripped almost naked, and left for dead in the field. Mr. Baxter, and one Lieutenant Hurdman, taking their walk among the wounded and dead bodies, perceived some life left in the Major, and Hurdman run him through the body in cold blood. Mr. Baxter all the while looking on, and taking off, with his own hand, the king's picture from about his neck, told him, as he was swimming in his gore, that he was a popish rogue, and that was his crucifix. This picture was kept by Mr. Baxter for many years, till it was got from him, but not without much difficulty, by one Mr. Somerfield, who then lived with Sir Thomas Rous. He generously restored it to the poor man, now alive at Wick, near Pershore, in Worcestershire, although, at the fight, supposed to be dead; being, after the wounds given him, dragged up and down the field by the merciless soldiers. Mr.

[z] Major-General Harrison was the son of a grazier at Nantwich, in Cheshire, and bred an attorney, but quitted that profession in the beginning of the civil war. He was a man of courage and of great volubility, and was of singular use to Cromwell in subduing the Presbyterians. He was one of those who pleaded *for* a *legal trial* of Charles I., whom he undertook to bring from Hurst Castle, for that purpose. He is said to have amused Fairfax with long prayers, for which he had an admirable talent, at the time of the king's execution. He was one of the ten regicides, as they were called, who were executed in October, 1660, and died exulting in the cause for which he suffered. —*Granger's Biog. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 65.

Baxter approved of the inhumanity by feeding his eyes with so bloody and so barbarous a spectacle.

"I, Thomas Jennings, subscribe to the truth of this narrative, and have hereunto put my hand and seal, this second day of March, 1682."[a]

In reply to this extraordinary charge, Baxter says:

"I do not think Major Jennings knowingly made this lie; but was directed by somebody's report, and my sending him the medal. I do solemnly protest, that to my knowledge, I never saw Major Jennings; that I never saw a man wound, hurt, strip or touch him; that I never spake a word to him, much less any word here affirmed; that I neither took the picture from about his neck, nor saw who did it; that I was not in the field when it was done; that I walked not among any wounded or dead, nor heard of any killed, but of one man; and that the picture was never got from me with difficulty; but that this is the truth,—The parliament had a few men in Langford House, and the king at Lyndsel, about a mile and a half asunder, who used oft to skirmish and dare each other in the fields between. My innocent father being prisoner at Lyndsel; and I, being at Langford, resolved not to go thence till he was delivered; I saw the soldiers go out, as they oft did, and in another field discerned them to meet and fight. I knew not that they had seen Jennings; but, being in the house, a soldier showed a small medal of gilt silver, bigger than a shilling, and told us that he wounded Jennings, and took his coat, and took that medal from about his neck; I bought it of him for eighteen-pence, no one offering more. Some years after, the first time that I heard where he was, I freely desired Mr. Somerfield to give it him from me, who had never seen him; supposing it was a mark of honour which might be useful to him. And now these lies are all the thanks that ever I had."[b]

Such is Baxter's full and satisfactory explanation of one of the most improbable and wicked calumnies that ever was propagated against a man of God. It is a curious illustration of the state of the times, that such a base story could find reporters and believers, not only among the ignorant and the profligate, but even among the respectable part of the clergy. It was believed and circulated not merely by such persons as Vernon, and Long, and Lestrange; but by Dr. Boreman, of Trinity College, Cam-

[a] Baxter's True Hist. of Councils, pp. 1—6.
[b] Ibid.

bridge; and Dr. Allestry, of Oxford. The latter, however, much to his credit, wrote him a letter of apology. But we must now return to the account of the army.

"Goring immediately fled with his army further westward, to Exeter; but Fairfax stayed to besiege Bridgewater; and after two days it was taken by storm, in which Colonel Hammond's service was much magnified. Mr. Peters, having come to the army from London but a day before, went presently back with the news of Goring's rout: when an hundred pounds reward was voted to himself for bringing the news, and to Major Bethel for his service; but no reward was given to Captain Evanson, because he was no sectary. Bethel alone had all the glory and applause from Cromwell and that party.

"From Bridgewater the army went back towards Bristol; where Prince Rupert was taking Nunny Castle and Bath in the way. At Bristol they continued the siege about a month. After the first three days, I fell sick of a fever, the plague being round about my quarters. As soon as I felt my disease, I rode six or seven miles back into the country, and the next morning, with much ado, I got to Bath. Here Dr. Venner was my careful physician: and when I was near death, far from all my acquaintance, it pleased God to restore me; and on the fourteenth day the fever ended in a crisis. But it left me so emaciated and weak, that it was long ere I recovered the little strength I had before. I came back to Bristol siege three or four days before the city was taken. The foot, which were to storm the works, would not go on unless the horse, who had no service to do, went with them. So Whalley's regiment was fain to go on to encourage the foot, and to stand to be shot at before the ordnance, while the foot stormed the forts. Here Major Bethel, who in the last fight had his thumb shot, had a shot in his thigh, of which he died, and was much lamented. The outworks being taken, Prince Rupert yielded up the city, upon terms that he might march away with his soldiers, leaving their ordnance and arms.

"After this, the army marched to Sherborne Castle, the Earl of Bristol's house: which, after a fortnight's siege, they took by storm; and that on a side which one would think could never have been that way taken. While they were there, the countrymen, called clubmen, rose near Shaftsbury, and got upon the top of a hill. A party was sent out against them, who marched

up the hill, and routed them; though some of the valiantest men were slain in the front.

"When Sherborne Castle was taken, part of the army went back and took in a small garrison by Salisbury, called Langford house, and so marched to Winchester Castle, and took that after a week's siege, or little more. From thence Cromwell went, with a good party, to besiege Basing-house, the Marquis of Winchester's, which had frustrated great sieges heretofore. Here Colonel Hammond was taken prisoner into the house, afterwards the house was taken by storm, and he saved the Marquis and others; and much riches were taken by the soldiers.[c]

"In the mean time the rest of the army marched down again towards the Lord Goring, and Cromwell came after them. When we followed Lord Goring westward, we found that, above all other armies of the king, his soldiers were most hated by the people, for their incredible profaneness, and their unmerciful plundering, many of them being foreigners. A sober gentleman, whom I quartered with at South Pederton, in Somersetshire, averred to me, that, when with him, a company of them pricked their fingers, and let the blood run into the cup, and drank a health to the devil in it: and no place could I come into, but their horrid impiety and outrages made them odious.

"The army marched down by Hunnington to Exeter; where I continued near three weeks among them at the siege, and then Whalley's regiment, with the General's, Fleetwood's, and others, being sent back, I returned with them and left the siege; which continued till the city was taken. The army following Goring into Cornwall, there forced him to lay down arms, his men going away beyond sea, or elsewhere, without their arms: and at last, Pendennis Castle, and all the garrisons there, were taken.

"In the mean time, Whalley was to command the return of the party of horse, to keep in the garrison of Oxford till the army could come to besiege it: and so in the extreme winter, he quartered about six weeks in Buckinghamshire: and then was sent to lay siege to Banbury Castle, where Sir William Compton was governor, who had wearied out one long siege before. There I was with them above two months, till the castle was taken; and then he was sent to lay siege to Worcester, with the

[c] Life, part 1. pp. 54, 55.

help of the Northampton, and Warwick, and Newport Pagnel soldiers, who had assisted him at Banbury. At Worcester, he lay in siege eleven weeks: and at the same time, the army being come up from the west, lay in siege at Oxford.

"By this time, Colonel Whalley, though Cromwell's kinsman, and commander of the trusted regiment, grew odious among the sectarian commanders at the head quarters. For my sake he was called a Presbyterian, though neither he nor I were of that judgment in several points; Major Salloway not omitting to use his industry in the matter to that end. When he had brought the city to a necessity of present yielding, two or three days before it yielded, Colonel Rainsborough was sent from Oxford, which had yielded, with some regiments of foot to command in chief; partly that he might be governor there, and not Whalley, when the city was surrendered. So when it was yielded, Rainsborough was governor, to head and gratify the sectaries, and settle city and county in their way: but the committee of the county were for Whalley, and lived in distaste with Rainsborough, and the sectaries prospered there no further than Worcester city itself, a place which deserved such a judgment; but all the country was free from their infection.

"All this while, as I had friendly converse with the sober part, so I was still employed with the rest as before, in preaching, conference, and disputing against their confounding errors; and in all places where we went, the sectarian soldiers much infected the counties, by their pamphlets and converse. The people admiring the conquering army, were ready to receive whatsoever they commended to them; and it was the way of the faction to represent what they said, as the sense of the army, and to make the people believe that whatever opinion they vented, which one in forty of the army owned not, was the army's opinion. When we quartered at Agmondesham, in Buckinghamshire, some sectaries of Chesham had set up a public meeting for conference, to propagate their opinions through all the country; and this in the church, by the encouragement of an ignorant sectarian lecturer, one Bramble, whom they had got in, while Dr. Cook, the pastor, and Mr. Richardson, his curate, durst not contradict them. When this public talking-day came, Bethel's troopers, with other sectarian soldiers, must be there to confirm the Chesham men, and make men believe that the army was for them. I thought it my duty to be there also, and took divers sober officers with me, to let them see that more of

the army were against them than for them. I took the reading pew, and Pitchford's cornet and troopers took the gallery. And there I found a crowded congregation of poor well-meaning people, who came in the simplicity of their hearts to be deceived. Then did the leader of the Chesham men begin, and afterwards Pitchford's soldiers set in, and I alone disputed against them from morning until almost night; for I knew their trick, that if I had but gone out first, they would have prated what boasting words they listed when I was gone, and made the people believe that they had baffled me, or got the best; therefore, I stayed it out till they first rose and went away. The abundance of nonsense which they uttered that day, may partly be seen in Mr. Edward's 'Gangræna;' for I had wrote a letter of it to a friend in London, so that and another were put into Mr. Edward's book, without my name.[d] But some of the sober people of Agmondesham, gave me abundance of thanks for that day's work, which they said would never be there forgotten; I heard also that the sectaries were so discouraged that they never met there any more. I am sure I had much thanks from Dr. Cook, and Mr. Richardson, who, being obnoxious to their displeasure for being for the king, durst not open their mouths themselves. After the conference, I talked with the lecturer, Mr. Bramble, and found him little wiser than the rest.

"The chief impediments to the success of my endeavours, I found, were only two: the discountenance of Cromwell, and the chief officers of his mind, which kept me a stranger from their meetings and councils; and my incapacity of speaking to many, as soldiers' quarters are scattered far from one another, and I could be but in one place at once. So that one troop at a time, ordinarily, and some few more extraordinary, was all that I could speak to. The most of the service I did beyond Whalley's regiment was, by the help of Capt. Lawrence, with some of the General's regiment, and sometimes I had converse with Major Harrison and a few others; but I found that if the army had only had ministers enough, who would have done such little as I did, all their plot might have been broken, and king, parliament, and religion, might have been preserved. I, therefore, sent abroad to get some more ministers among them, but I could get none. Saltmarsh and Dell were the two great preachers at the

[d] This letter appears in the third part of that precious collection of absurdity, calumny, and lying. It is to be regretted that Baxter should have contributed any thing to such a farrago of nonsense and wickedness.

head quarters; but honest and judicious Mr. Edward Bowles kept still with the General.[e] At last I got Mr. Cook, of Foxhull, to come to assist me; and the soberer part of the officers and soldiers of Whalley's regiment were willing to remunerate him out of their own pay. A month or two he stayed and assisted me; but was quickly weary, and left them again. He was a very worthy, humble, laborious man, unwearied in preaching, but weary when he had not opportunity to preach, and weary of the spirits he had to deal with.

"All this while, though I came not near Cromwell, his designs were visible, and I saw him continually acting his part. The Lord General suffered him to govern and do all, and to choose almost all the officers of the army. He first made Ireton commissary-general; and when any troop or company was to be disposed of, or any considerable officer's place was void, he was sure to put a sectary in the place: and when the brunt of the war was over, he looked not so much at their valour as their opinions; so that, by degrees, he had headed the greatest part of the army with anabaptists, antinomians, seekers, or separatists, at best. All these he led together by the point of liberty of conscience, which was the common interest in which they did unite. Yet all the sober party were carried on by his profession, that he only promoted the universal interest of the godly, without any distinction or partiality at all; but still, when a place fell void, it was twenty to one a sectary had it; and if a godly man, of any other mind or temper, had a mind to leave the army, he would, secretly or openly, further it. Yet did he not openly profess what opinion he was of himself: but the most that he said for any was for Anabaptism and Antinomianism, which he usually seemed to own. Harrison, who was then great with him, was for the same opinions. He would not dispute with me at all; but he would, in good discourse, very fluently pour out himself in the extolling of free grace, which was savoury to those that had right principles, though he had some misunderstandings of free grace himself. He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory, but not well seen in the principles of his religion; of a sanguine complexion,

[e] Mr. Bowles left the army in January, 1645, for his charge at York, and was succeeded by Dell, as chaplain to the General. He and Saltmarsh were both inclined to Antinomianism. The latter was a complete mystic; though perhaps both went further afterwards, than when they were about Fairfax, who seems to have been a moderate, sober-minded man.—*Sprigge's Anglia*, p. 166.

naturally of such vivacity, hilarity, and alacrity, as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much; but naturally, also, so far from humble thoughts of himself, that pride was his ruin.

"All the two years that I was in the army, even my old bosom friend, who had lived in my house and been dearest to me, James Berry, then captain, after colonel and major-general, then lord of the Upper House, who had formerly invited me to Cromwell's old troop, did never once invite me to the army at first, nor invite me to his quarters after, nor ever once came to visit me, or even saw me, save twice or thrice that we met accidentally. So potent is the interest of ourselves and our opinions with us, against all other bonds whatever. He that forsaketh himself in forsaking his own opinions, may well be expected to forsake his friend, who adhereth to the way which he forsaketh; and that change which maketh him think he was himself an ignorant, misguided man before, must needs make him think his friend to be still ignorant and misguided, and value him accordingly. He was a man, I verily think, before the wars, of great sincerity; of very good natural parts, especially mathematical and mechanical; affectionate in religion, and while conversant with humbling providences, doctrines, and company, he carried himself as a very great enemy to pride: but when Cromwell made him his favourite, and his extraordinary valour was crowned with extraordinary success, and when he had been awhile most conversant with those, who, in religion, thought the old Puritan ministers were dull, self-conceited men, of a lower form, and that new light had declared I know not what to be a higher attainment, his mind, his aim, his talk and all were altered accordingly. And as ministers of the old way were lower, and sectaries much higher, in his esteem than formerly; so he was much higher in his own esteem when he thought he had attained much higher, than he was before, when he sat with his fellows in the common form. Being never well studied in the body of divinity, but taking his light among the sectaries, before the light which longer and patient studies of divinity should have possessed him with, he lived after as honestly as could be expected in one that taketh error for truth, and evil to be good.

"After this, he was president of the agitators, a major-general and lord, a principal person in the changes, and the chief executioner in pulling down Richard Cromwell; and then one of the governing council of state. All this was promoted by

the misunderstanding of Providence; for he verily thought that God, by their victories, had so called them to look after the government of the land, and so entrusted them with the welfare of all his people here, that they were responsible for it, and might not in conscience stand still while any thing was done which they thought was against that interest which they judged to be the interest of the people of God.

"As he was the chief in pulling down, he was one of the first that fell: for Sir Arthur Haselrigge taking Portsmouth, his regiment of horse, sent to block it up, went most of them to Sir Arthur. And when the army was melted to nothing, and the king ready to come in, the council of state imprisoned him, because he would not promise to live peaceably; and afterwards he (being one of the four whom General Monk had the worst thoughts of) was closely confined in Scarborough Castle; but, being released, he became a gardener, and lived in a safer state than in all his greatness.[f]

"When Worcester siege was over, having seen, with joy, Kidderminster, and my friends there once again, the country being now cleared, my old flock expected that I should return to them, and settle in peace among them. I accordingly went to Coventry, and called the ministers again together, who voted me into the army. I told them, that the forsaking of the army, by the old ministers, and the neglect of supplying their places by others, had undone us; that I had laboured among them with as much success as could be expected in the narrow sphere of my capacity: but that was little to all the army; that the active sectaries were the smallest part of the army among the common soldiers, but that Cromwell had lately put so many of them into superior command, and their industry was so much greater than others, they were like to have their will; that whatever obedience they pretended, I doubted not but they would pull down all that stood in their way, in state and church, both king, parliament, and ministers, and

[f] I am inclined to think that Baxter has expressed a more unfavourable opinion of Berry than he deserved. He probably found it inexpedient or even dangerous, to countenance Baxter's zeal in endeavouring to reform the army and obstruct the design of its leaders; to avoid quarrelling with an inoffensive and well-meaning but, as he would regard him, a wrong-headed man, he kept out of his way. Berry was a man of talents and energy; one of the men who was formed by the times; who lived in the tempest and the earthquake, and sunk into obscurity in the calm. I have noticed him in the Memoirs of Owen, p. 279, 2d edit.

set up themselves. I told them that for the little that I had done, I had ventured my life, and weakened my body (weak before), but that the day, which I expected, was yet to come; and that the greatest service with the greatest hazard was yet before. The wars being now ended, I was confident the leaders would shortly show their purpose, and set up for themselves: and when the day came, all that were true to king, parliament, and religion, ought to appear, if there were any hope, by contradicting them, or drawing off the soldiers from them, as it was all the service that was yet possible to be done. I was likely to do no great matter in such an attempt; but there being so many in the army of my mind, I knew not what might be till the day should discover it: and though I knew it was the greatest hazard of my life, my judgment was for staying among them till the crisis, if their judgment did concur. Whereupon they all voted me to go and leave Kidderminster yet longer, which accordingly I did.

"From Worcester I went to London to Sir Theodore Mayern, about my health: he sent me to Tunbridge Wells, and after some stay there to my benefit, I went back to London, and so to my quarters in Worcestershire, where the regiment was. My quarters fell out to be at Sir Thomas Rous's, at Rous-Lench, where I had never been before. The Lady Rous was a godly, grave, understanding woman, and entertained me not as a soldier, but a friend. From thence I went into Leicestershire, Staffordshire, and at last into Derbyshire. One advantage of this moving life was, that I had opportunity to preach in many counties and parishes; and whatever came of it afterward, I know not; but at the time, they commonly seemed to be much affected.

"I came to Major Swallow's quarters, at Sir John Cook's house, at Melbourn, on the edge of Derbyshire, beyond Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in a cold and snowy season: and the cold, together with other things coincident, set my nose on bleeding. When I had bled about a quart or two, I opened four veins, but that did no good. I used divers other remedies, for several days, to little purpose: at last I gave myself a purge, which stopped it. This so much weakened me, and altered my complexion, that my acquaintances who came to visit me, scarcely knew me. Coming after so long weakness, and frequent loss of blood before, it made the physicians conclude me *deplorate*, supposing I could never escape a dropsy.

"Thus God unavoidably prevented all the effect of my purposes in my last and chiefest opposition of the army; and took me off the very time when my attempt should have begun. My purpose was to have done my best, first to take off that regiment which I was with, and then, with Captain Lawrence, to have tried upon the General's, in which two were Cromwell's chief confidents; and then to have joined with others of the same mind; for the other regiments were much less corrupted. But the determination of God against it was most observable: for the very time that I was bleeding, the council of war sat at Nottingham, where, as I have credibly heard, they first began to open their purpose and act their part; and, presently after, they entered into their engagement at Triploe Heath. As I perceived it was the will of God to permit them to go on, so I afterwards found that this great affliction was a mercy to myself; for they were so strong, and active, that I had been likely to have had small success in the attempt, and to have lost my life among them in their fury. And thus I was finally separated from the army.

"When I had staid at Melbourn, in my chamber, three weeks, being among strangers, and not knowing how to get home, I went to Mr. Nowell's house, at Kirby-Mallory, in Leicestershire, where, with great kindness, I was entertained three weeks. By that time, the tidings of my weakness came to the Lady Rous, in Worcestershire, who sent her servant to seek me out; and when he returned, and told her I was afar off, and he could not find me, she sent him again to find me, and bring me thither, if I were able to travel. So, in great weakness, thither I made shift to get, where I was entertained with the greatest care and tenderness, while I continued the use of means for my recovery: and when I had been there a quarter of a year, I returned to Kidderminster." [g]

Thus terminated Baxter's connexion with the army. In reviewing his account of it, we cannot help admiring the disinterestedness of the motives by which he appears to have been influenced, and the self-denial which he exercised. He entered the army by the advice of his friends, and with the sincere intention of doing good; but with greater confidence in the effects to be produced by his labours than the circumstances warranted. These high-minded soldiers, accustomed to dispute as well as to fight,

[g] Life, part 1. pp. 55—59.

and who were no less confident of victory in the polemic arena than of triumph in the field of battle, were not to be put down by the controversial powers of Baxter, great as those powers were. To his metaphysical distinctions, they opposed their personal feelings and convictions, which were produced by a very different process, and not to be altered by any refinements of disquisition. When he contended against the justice of their cause, to his arguments they opposed their success; and often must he have lost in their estimation as a politician, what he had gained by his talents and piety as a divine. Movement, and dispersion, which were death to him, were life to them. It kept up their spirits and their excitement, by giving them fresh opportunities of exercising their gifts, both of the sword and of the tongue. Much as the leaders of the army respected religion, they had too much discernment to encourage the influx of many such ministers as Baxter. Cromwell and his officers had no objection to an occasional theological contest among the soldiers, or, even to engage in one themselves. It relieved the tug of war: it operated as a divertisement from other subjects on which their minds would have been less profitably employed; while it often excited that very ardour of soul, on which the success of the army of the Commonwealth mainly depended.

I am not sure that even the ministers themselves were not pleased, in this manner to be rid of Baxter. It is remarkable, that while they warmly approved of his going into the army and remaining with it, few of them were disposed to follow his example. This could not arise from the apprehension of personal danger, for they could have little to fear of this nature. In fact, they must generally have been safer with the army than in the towns to which they sometimes resorted for protection. While associating with Baxter, they must have remarked the fearless character of his mind, his recklessness of danger, and his regardlessness of consequences. His love of disputation, his qualifications as a debater, and his devotedness to what he regarded as the cause of his Master, all fitted him for such a field as the army presented. The very qualities, however, which fitted him for the camp, rendered him less desirable as a companion in the retired and secluded walks of life. A company of ministers, shut up in a provincial town with Baxter for twelve months, probably found him a troublesome friend. The restless activity of his mind could not, in such circumstances, find scope or em-

ployment. By advising him, then, to follow his own convictions, and join the army, they at once did homage to his talents, and gratified his love of employment; while, by remaining in retirement and safety themselves, they showed either their love of ease, or that they had little confidence in the wisdom or success of Baxter's attempt to save his country, and deliver his king, by ministerial influence over the soldiers.

Whatever weight may be due to these reasonings, it is evident that, in the army, Baxter was neither an idle nor an unconcerned spectator. He laboured indefatigably, and persevered amidst all discouragements. He failed in his main object; but he succeeded in repressing evil, and in encouraging much that was good. He acquired considerable additions to his stock of experience, and his knowledge of men, and has left us some important information respecting the characters and events of this period.

During the latter part of the time which he spent in the army, and chiefly when laid aside by severe illness, he wrote, though they were not then published, his 'Aphorisms of Justification,' and his 'Saint's Rest.' The last work chiefly occupied his thoughts and his pen, though the other appeared first. His disputes with the antinomian soldiers led to his 'Aphorisms,' while his labours and afflictions produced his meditations on 'The Saint's Everlasting Rest.' A work begun and finished in these circumstances might be supposed to betray traces of haste and crudeness; but of this, such is far from being the case. It discovers the maturity and elevation of mind to which he had even then risen; and had he never written more, it would have stamped his character as one of the most devotional, and most eloquent men of his own, or of any other age.

CHAPTER IV.

1646—1656.

The Religious Parties of the Period—The Westminster Assembly—Character of the Erastians—Episcopalians—Presbyterians—Independents—Baptists—State of Religion in these Parties—Minor Sects—Vanists—Seekers—Ranters—Quakers—Behmenists—Review of this period.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, given a view of the civil and military affairs with which Baxter was connected, from the commencement of his ministry till the time of his leaving the army, we must now attend to the religious state of the nation, which was no less full of distraction, and of which he has left a very particular account. If this part of our narrative should carry us into the period of the commonwealth, it will save future repetition, as most of the sects which then swarmed, had either commenced their existence during the civil wars, or naturally sprung out of the excitement and turbulence which those wars produced.

While Baxter lived in Coventry, the celebrated Westminster Assembly was convened by order of parliament. He was not himself a member of that body; but he was well acquainted with its chief transactions, and with the leading men of the several parties which composed it: and, as he has given his opinion of them at considerable length, it may be proper here to introduce it.

"This Synod was not a convocation, according to the diocesan way of government; nor was it called by the votes of the ministers, according to the presbyterian way: for the parliament, not intending to call an assembly which should pretend to a divine right to make obligatory laws or canons, but an ecclesiastical council, to be advisers to itself, thought it best knew who were fittest to give advice, and therefore chose them all itself. Two were to be chosen from each county, though some counties had but one, that it might seem impartial, and give each party liberty to speak. Over and above this number, it chose many of the most learned, episcopal divines; as, Archbishop Usher, Dr. Holdsworth, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Wincop, Bishops Westfield

and Prideaux, and many more; but they would not come, because the king declared himself against it. Dr. Featley, and a few more of that party, however, came; but at last he was charged with sending intelligence to the king, for which he was imprisoned. The divines there congregated, were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity: and being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the more freely speak the truth, even in the face of malice and envy; that, as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidences left us, the Christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines than this and the synod of Dort.

"Yet, highly as I honour the men, I am not of their mind in every part of the government which they would have set up. Some words in their Catechism, I wish had been more clear: and, above all, I wish that the parliament, and their more skilful hand, had done more than was done to heal our breaches, and had hit upon the right way, either to unite with the Episcopalians and Independents, or, at least, had pitched on the terms that are fit for universal concord, and left all to come in upon those terms that would." [a]

This account of the Westminster Assembly is, doubtless, more impartial than the character which has been given of it, either by Clarendon or Milton. Both these writers were under the influence, though in different ways, of strong prejudices against it. The former, by his monarchical and episcopal predilections; the latter, by his republicanism. Clarendon hated presbyterianism, with all the cordiality of a cavalier, who regarded it as a religion unfit for a gentleman, and as synonymous with all that is vulgar, hypocritical, and base. Milton abhorred it on account of its intolerant spirit, and the narrow-minded bigotry of many of its adherents; as well as for private reasons. The Assembly was, in the estimation of both, the personification of all that should be detested by enlightened and high-born men; they hated and reviled it accordingly. Baxter knew the members better than Clarendon or Milton did, and was better qualified to judge their motives and appreciate their doings. As he was not one of them, he had no temptation to speak in their favour; and from his well-known love of truth, had he known any thing to their prejudice, he would not have concealed it. The persons who composed the Assembly, were generally men of approved

[a] Life, part i. p. 93.

christian character and abilities, and several of them distinguished for learning. But both the men and their doings have been too highly extolled by some, and too much undervalued by others.[b]

[b] Lord Clarendon's account of the Assembly is as follows:—"And now the parliament showed what consultation they meant to have with godly and learned divines, and what reformation they intended, by appointing the knights and burgesses to bring in the names of such divines for the several counties, as they thought fit to constitute an assembly for the framing a new model for the government of the church, which was done accordingly; those who were true sons of the church, not so much as endeavouring the nomination of sober and learned men, abhorring such a reformation as began with the invasion and suppression of the church's rights, in a synod as well known as Magna Charta: and if any well-affected member, not enough considering the scandal and the consequence of that violation, did name an orthodox and well-reputed divine to assist in that assembly, it was argument enough against him, that he was nominated by a person in whom they had no confidence; and they only had reputation enough to commend to this consultation those who were known to desire the utter demolishing of the whole fabric of the church: so that of about one hundred and twenty of which that assembly was to consist, though by the recommendation of two or three members of the Commons, whom they were not willing to displease, and by the authority of the Lords, who added a small number to those named by the House of Commons, a few very reverend and worthy men were inserted; yet, of the whole number there were not above twenty who were not declared and avowed enemies to the doctrine or discipline of the church of England; some of them infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts in learning, if not of scandalous ignorance; and of no other reputation than of malice to the church of England. So that that convention hath not since produced any thing that might not then reasonably have been expected from it."—*Hist. of the Rebellion*, vol. i. pp. 530, 531. Edit. 1720.

The charges contained in the latter part of this paragraph, are utterly unfounded. The members of the Assembly were, in general, respectable for their talents and learning; and all of them were highly respectable in point of character. It is equally untrue that all, or even any considerable number of them, were enemies to the church of England.

The passage in which Milton attacks the Assembly, is written with his usual force, or, as I ought rather to say, acrimony, when he was excited by opposition.

"And if the state were in this plight, religion was not in much better; to reform which, a certain number of divines were called, neither chosen by any rule or custom ecclesiastical, nor eminent for either piety or knowledge above others left out; only as each member of parliament, in his private fancy, thought fit, so elected one by one. The most part of them were such as had preached and cried down, with great show of zeal, the avarice and pluralities of bishops and prelates; that, one cure of souls was a full employment for one spiritual pastor, how able soever, if not a charge rather above human strength. Yet these conscientious men (ere any part of the work was done for which they came together, and that on the public salary) wanted not boldness, to the ignominy and scandal of their pastor-like profession, and especially of their boasted reformation, to seize into their hands, or not unwillingly to accept, (besides one, sometimes two or more, of the best livings) collegiate masterships in the University, rich lectures in the city; setting sail to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms: by which means these great rebukers of non-residence, among so many distant cures, were not ashamed to be seen so

It seems very doubtful whether the parliament wished that the Assembly should unite in a form of church government to be imposed on the country.* It was called, to engage the attention of the Puritans, and to please the sects which were invited to send members to it. The leading politicians of the period, were too wise to suppose that men, so widely different in sentiment as

quickly pluralists and non-residents themselves, to a fearful condemnation; doubtless, by their own mouths. And yet the main doctrine for which they took such pay, and insisted upon with more vehemence than Gospel, was but to tell us, in effect, that their doctrine was worth nothing, and the spiritual power of their ministry less available than bodily compulsion; persuading the magistrate to use it as a stronger means to subdue and bring in conscience, than evangelical persuasion: distrusting the virtue of their own spiritual weapons which were given them, if they might be rightly called, with full warrant of sufficiency to pull down all thoughts and imaginations that exalt themselves against God. But while they taught compulsion without convincement, which, long before, they complained of as executed unchristianly against themselves, their contents are clear to have been no better than antichristian; setting up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power, to the advancing of their own authority above the magistrate, whom they would have made their executioner to punish church delinquencies, whereof civil laws have no cognisance.

"And well did their disciples manifest themselves to be no better principled than their teachers; trusted with committeeships and other gainful offices, upon their commendations for zealous and (as they hesitated not to term them) godly men, but executing their places like children of the devil, unfaithfully, unjustly, unmercifully, and, where not corruptly, stupidly. So that between them, the teachers, and these, the disciples, there hath not been a more ignominious and mortal wound to faith, to piety, to the work of reformation, nor more cause of blaspheming given to the enemies of God and truth, since the first preaching of the reformation."

This passage belongs to Milton's 'Fragment of a History of England,' first published in 1670; but from which the quotation was expunged. It was first printed by itself, in 1681; and afterwards appeared in the edition of his works published in 1738. It should be remembered, that Milton did not assail the Assembly till after some of them had denounced his work on the 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce;' which led to his being brought before the House of Lords for that publication. Nothing arose from this occurrence injurious to Milton; but he never forgave the Presbyterian clergy the offence, and revenges himself on the Assembly in the above tirade. It deserves to be noticed, that his work on 'Divorce' is dedicated to this very Assembly, as well as to the Long Parliament; both of which he afterwards so severely denounces. In that dedication, he speaks of them as a "select assembly"—"of so much piety and wisdom"—"a learned and memorable synod," in which "piety, learning, and prudence, were housed." This dedication was written *two* years after the Assembly had met, and when its character must have been well known. When he published his 'Tetrachordon,' in defence of the former work, he leaves out the Assembly in the dedication, and addresses it to the parliament only. In the 'Colasterion,' he attacks the anonymous member of the Assembly, who had assailed him, with the utmost scurrility; and, from that time, never failed to abuse the Presbyterians and the Assembly. It is painful to detract from the fair fame of Milton; but even he is not entitled to vilify the character of a large and respectable body of men, to avenge his private quarrel.

those who were chosen to sit in this convocation, would ever agree in the divine right and universal obligation of any ecclesiastical system; and, that they did not wish them to agree, seems probable, from the fact, that in general, when there appeared an approach towards the completion of their ecclesiastical code, new difficulties or questions were always proposed to them, which occasioned protracted debates and increasing differences. The Assembly at last broke up without finishing its work.[c]

A short account of the several leading parties in the country, or which were represented in the Assembly, will justify these remarks, and throw light on the life of Baxter, as well as on the state of the period. Baxter himself shall furnish the chief part of the information; because he tells us what he liked and disliked in the Erastian, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent parties.

The Erastian party, in the Assembly, was composed chiefly of lawyers, and other secular persons; who understood the nature of civil government better than the nature, forms, and ends of the church of Christ; and of those offices appointed by him for purposes purely spiritual. The leading laymen among them, were Selden and Whitelocke, both lawyers, and men of profound learning and talents. Lightfoot and Coleman were distinguished as much among the divines for rabbinical knowledge, as the two former were among the men of their own profession.

"The Erastians," says Baxter, "I thought, were in the right, in asserting more fully than others, the magistrates' power in matters of religion; that all coercion, by mulcts or force, should only be in their hands; that no such power belongs to the pastors or people of the church; and that the pastoral power is only persuasive, or exercised on volunteers." But he disliked in them, "that they made too light of the power of the ministry, church, and excommunication; that they made church communion more common to the impenitent, than Christ would have it; that they made the church too like the world, by breaking down the hedge of spiritual discipline, and laying it almost common with the wilderness; and that they misunderstood and injured their brethren, affirming that they claimed as from God a *coercive power* over the bodies and consciences of men."[d] The

[c] Bailie's Letter, and Journals passim; Memoirs of Owen, pp. 53, 54, 400, 2d edition.

[d] Life, part ii. p. 139. The following amusing account of the origin and pro-

tendency and design of the system would certainly convert the church into the world, and the world into the church.

"The Episcopal party," he says, "seemed to have reason on their side in this, that in the primitive church there were apostles, evangelists, and others, who were general unfixed officers, not tied to any particular charge; but who had some superiority over fixed bishops or pastors. And as to fixed bishops of particular churches, that were superior in degree to presbyters, though I saw nothing at all in Scripture for them; yet I saw that the reception of them was so very early, and so very general, I thought it most improbable that it was contrary to the mind of the apostles.

"I utterly disliked their extirpation of the true discipline of Christ, not only as they omitted or corrupted it, but as their principles and church state had made it impracticable. They thus altered the nature of churches, and the ancient nature of bishops and presbyters. They set up secular courts, vexed honest Christians, countenanced ungodly teachers, opposed faithful ministers, and promoted the increase of ignorance and profaneness."[e]

No supporters of such views were in the Assembly; but not a few of the members were partial to a limited episcopacy, such as that for which Baxter himself pleaded. Indeed, a number of them would not take the covenant when it came from Scotland, till it was explained that the episcopacy which they were called to disown, was only the hierarchy of England.[f] Among these were, Gataker, Burgess, Arrowsmith, and several other persons of some note. In the parliament there was a large proportion of persons of this description, who were much more disposed to

gress of Erastianism, is from the pen of Mr. George Gillespie, one of the Scots commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, who wrote a volume against it under the title of 'Aaron's Rod Blossoming.'—"The father of it is the old serpent; its mother is the enmity of our nature against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the midwife who brought this unhappy brood into the light of the world, was Thomas Erastus, doctor of medicine, at Heidelberg. The Erastian error being born, the breasts which gave it suck, were profaneness and self; its strong food when advanced in growth, was arbitrary government; and its careful tutor was Arminianism."—Book i. chap. 2. The book from which this curious extract is taken, is written with considerable ability, and contains unanswerable arguments in proof that the New Testament furnishes a form of church government, which Christians are bound to adopt. It deserves to be read as an antidote to the plausible but fallacious reasonings of the 'Irenicum,' of Bishop Stillingfleet.

[e] Life, part ii. p. 140. [f] Neal, iii., p. 56.

acknowledge a limited episcopacy than to submit to the divine right of Presbytery.

The great body of the Assembly, and of the Nonconformists, were Presbyterians, attached from principle to the platform of Geneva, and exceedingly desirous, in alliance with Scotland, of establishing Presbyterian uniformity throughout the kingdom. The leaders of this party in the Assembly were, Calamy, Twiss, Whyte, Palmer, Marshall, and the Scottish commissioners. And in the House of Commons, Hollis, Glyn, Maynard, Clement Walker, and William Prynne. They were supported by Essex, Manchester, and Northumberland, among the peers; and by the body of the clergy of London, the mass of the religious professors in the metropolis, and some distinguished persons in the army. To this class of professors Baxter was more attached than to any other, though it is evident, that while he eulogized its virtues, he was not blind to its faults.

"As for the Presbyterians," he says, "I found that the office of preaching presbyters, was allowed by all who deserved the name of Christians; that this office did participate, subserviently to Christ, in the *prophetical*, or teaching; the *priestly*, or worshipping; and the *governing* power; and that Scripture, antiquity, and the nature of church government, clearly show that all presbyters were church governors, as well as church teachers. To deny this, were to destroy the office and to endeavour to destroy the churches. I saw, also, in Scripture, antiquity, and reason, that the association of pastors and churches for agreement, and their synods in cases of necessity, are a plain duty: and that their ordinary stated synods are usually very convenient. I saw, too, that in England the persons who were called Presbyterians were eminent for learning, sobriety, and piety: and the pastors so called were those who went through the work of the ministry, in diligent, serious preaching to the people, and edifying men's souls and keeping up religion in the land."[g]

The following are the things in this body to which he objected: "I disliked their order of lay-elders, who had no ordination, or power to preach, or to administer sacraments: for though I grant that lay-elders, or the chief of the people, were often employed to express the people's consent, and preserve their liberties; yet these were no church officers at all, nor had any charge of private oversight of the flocks.

"I disliked, also, the course of some of the more rigid of them,

[g] Life, part ii., p. 140.

who drew too near the way of prelacy, by grasping at a kind of secular power; not using it themselves, but binding the magistrates to confiscate or imprison men, merely because they were excommunicated; and so corrupting the true discipline of the church, and turning the communion of saints into the communion of the multitude, who must keep in the church against their wills for fear of being undone in the world. Whereas, a man whose conscience cannot feel a just excommunication unless it be backed with confiscation or imprisonment, is no fitter to be a member of a Christian church, than a corpse is to be a member of a corporation. It is true they claim not this power as *jure divino;* but no more do the prelates, though the writ *de excommunicato capiendo* is the life of all their censures. Both parties too much debase the magistrate, by making him their mere executioner; whereas he ought to be the judge wherever he is the executioner, and ought to try the case at his own bar, before he be obliged to punish any delinquent. They also corrupt the discipline of Christ, by mixing it with secular force. They reproach the keys, or ministerial power, as if it were a leaden sword, and not worth a straw, unless the magistrate's sword enforce it. What, then, did the primitive church for three hundred years? Worst of all, they corrupt the church, by forcing in the rabble of the unfit and unwilling; and thereby tempt many godly Christians to schisms and dangerous separations. Till magistrates keep the sword themselves, and learn to deny it to every angry clergyman who would do his own work by it, and leave them to their own weapons—the word and spiritual keys—and, *valeant quantum valere possunt,* the church will never have unity and peace.

"I disliked, also, some of the Presbyterians, that they were not tender enough to dissenting brethren; but too much against liberty, as others were too much for it; and thought by votes and numbers to do that which love and reason should have done."[h]

While the reader must admire the candour of these remarks, as they bear on the party, with which Baxter was more identified than any other, he will no less cordially approve his enlightened views of the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power. Had they been always thus viewed and distinguished, how many evils would have been prevented both in the church and in the world! The governments of the earth would have been saved

[h] Life, part ii., pp. 142, 143.

a vast portion of the perplexity and trouble which they have experienced in the management of their affairs; and the church would have been preserved from much of that secularity which has attached to it, as well as from infinite suffering and sorrow. Unfortunately, Baxter was not always consistent with himself on these important points. The concluding sentence of this very extract shows, that while he was a friend of liberty, he was afraid of too much of it. He never would have been himself a persecutor; but he would not have objected to the exercise of a certain measure of coercion or restraint by others, in support of what he might have considered the good of the individuals themselves, or of what the interests of the community required.

Baxter was less friendly to the Independents than to any other of the leading parties of his times. For this, various reasons may be assigned. His principles and dispositions induced in him a greater attachment to ministerial or priestly power, than accorded with the principles of that body. The influence of some of its more active and learned ministers, and the support which they derived from some of the public characters whose exertions were directed to the overthrow of civil and religious despotism, and the establishment of general liberty, were greater than Baxter was disposed to approve. Above all, as he considered the great master-spirits of that agitating period, to be either really, or, for political reasons, professedly, attached to the polity of the Independents, he regarded the whole body with jealousy and dislike. I will not deny that he had some ground for part of the feeling which he entertained; though I think he was mistaken in various particulars. The following account of the Independents, considering Baxter's opinions, is honourable both to the writer and to the body to which it refers.

"Most of them were zealous, and very many learned, discreet, and godly men; fit to be very serviceable in the church. In the search of Scripture and antiquity, I found, that, in the beginning, a governed church, and a stated worshipping church, were all one, and not two several things; and that, though there might be other by-meetings in places like our chapels or private houses, for such as age or persecution hindered to come to the more solemn meetings, yet churches then were no bigger, in respect of number, than our parishes now. These were societies of Christians united for personal communion, and not only for communion by meetings of officers and delegates in synods, as

many churches in association be. I saw, if once we go beyond the bounds of personal communion, as the end of particular churches, in the definition, we may make a church of a nation, or of ten nations, or what we please, which shall have none of the nature and ends of the primitive, particular churches. I saw also a commendable care of serious holiness and discipline in most of the Independent churches; and I found that some episcopal men, as Bishop Usher himself, did hold that every bishop was independent, as to synods, and that synods were not proper governors of the particular bishops, but only for their concord."[1]

In this passage, Baxter grants almost every thing for which the Independents have contended. It is rather surprising, considering his acuteness, that he did not perceive the inferences which ought to be drawn from the premises. If primitive churches were possessed of separate and independent authority, and consisted only of those who appeared to be Christians; and if going beyond personal communion, as the great object of Christian association leaves every thing vague and indefinite, it seems very clear on which side the strength of the argument respecting church government and fellowship lies. In fact, Baxter was more an Independent or congregationalist, both in theory and practice, than he was generally disposed to admit.

We have given the bright side of the picture of this party; we must now look at the dark. "In the Independent way," he says, "I disliked many things. They made too light of ordination. They also had their office of lay-eldership. They were commonly stricter about the qualification of church members, than Scripture, reason, or the practice of the universal church would allow; not taking a man's bare profession as credible, and as sufficient evidence of his title to church communion; unless either by a holy life, or the particular narration of the passages of the work of grace, he satisfied the pastors, and all the church, that he was truly holy; whereas every man's profession is the valid evidence of the thing professed in his heart, unless it be disproved by him that questioneth it, by proving him guilty of heresies or impiety, or sins inconsistent with it. If once you go beyond the evidence of a serious, sober confession, as a credible and sufficient sign of title to church membership, you will never know where to rest. The church's opinion will be both rule and judge; and men will be let in, or kept out, according to the various latitude of opinions or charity in the several officers or

[1] Life, part i., p. 140.

churches; so that he will be passable in one church, who is intolerable in another; and thus the churches will be heterogeneous and confused.[k] There is in all this a little, if not more than a little, spiritual pride of the weaker sort of professors, affecting to be visibly set at a greater distance from the colder professors of Christianity, than God would have them, that so they may be more observable and conspicuous for their holiness in the world; and there is too much uncharitableness in it, when God hath given sincere professors the kernel of his mercies, even grace and glory, and yet they will grudge the cold, hypocritical professors, so small a thing as the outward shell, and visible communion and external ordinances; yea, though such are kept in the church for the sake and service of the sincere.

"I disliked, also, the lamentable tendency of this their way to divisions and subdivisions, and the nourishing of heresies and sects. But above all I disliked, that most of them made the people, by majority of votes, to be church governors, in excommunications, absolutions, &c., which Christ hath made an act of office, and so they governed their governors and themselves. They also too much exploded synods; refusing them as stated, and admitting them but upon some extraordinary occasions. I disliked, also, their over-rigidness against the admission of Christians of other churches to their communion. And their making a minister to be as no minister to any but his own flock, and to act to others but as a private man; with divers others such irregularities and dividing opinions; many of which the moderation of the New England synod hath of late corrected and disowned; and so done very much to heal these breaches."[l]

Such is Baxter's account of the Independents of his times. The number of their ministers who were members of the Westminster Assembly, did not exceed ten or twelve. Of these, Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Simpson, and Bridge, were reckoned

[k] I am not aware that Independents, either in early or in latter times, required more as the term of religious fellowship than a credible profession; that is, a profession entitled to belief, under all the circumstances in which it is made. As the tendency of human nature is to be lax, rather than rigid, Baxter's account of the rigidity of the body is greatly to its honour. The concluding reflections in the above paragraph, on the motives of the parties, and the defence of impure communion, are unworthy of Baxter. Some of the other things to which he objects, if they existed in the infancy of the body, exist no longer; and, therefore, do not require any comment. The author must refer the reader to the 'Memoirs of Dr. Owen,' for a fuller, and, as he considers, a more correct view of Independency, than what is given by Baxter, or than it would be proper to introduce here.

[l] Life, part ii., pp. 143, 144.

as the leaders, and by the admission of all parties were among the most distinguished in that body for learning, talents, and address. Baxter, Baillie, Lightfoot, and others, unite in bearing this testimony to them. They threw every possible obstacle in the way of establishing Presbyterian uniformity; and though outvoted by numbers, their resistance and perseverance, aided by the enlightened friends of religious liberty in parliament, among whom must be reckoned Vane, Cromwell, Pym, and Harrison, succeeded in preventing the ascendancy of a party, which, as it was then constituted, had it obtained sufficient power, would have mercilessly persecuted all who opposed its progress or were inimical to its interests.

These were the chief parties in England, when the Westminster Assembly was called, and which may be considered as represented in that body. Little difference existed among them on the leading principles of the Gospel; which, as appears from the confession and catechisms published by the Assembly, they held decidedly in the Calvinistic view of those principles. There were, doubtless, many persons whose religion could not be called in question, who would not have gone so far as some of the expressions in those documents; but considering the Assembly as a tolerably fair representative of the religious community of England at that time, no doubt can be entertained, that Calvinism was then the prevailing doctrinal system, both in the church and out of it.

On other points, especially those of church government and discipline, it is equally clear that they differed widely from each other, and never would agree in any common system. *Jure divino* prelatists, solemn-league-and-covenant presbyterians, latitudinarian Erastians, and tolerating independents, could not possibly coalesce as the friends and supporters of any scheme to which all should be required to submit. On leading points of ecclesiastical polity they were the antipodes of each other. Compromise was out of the question; submission to one another, where conscience was concerned, would have been regarded as sin against God; and even liberty to others, to act according to their own convictions, was considered by some of them too important a right to be admitted, or boon to be conferred. Mean time the cause of civil and religious freedom steadily advanced, and finally gained ascendancy. While the parties differed among themselves, nothing could be enforced by authority; and when the majority decided in favour of the divine right of pres-

byterianism, the civil powers had fallen into hands which took effectual care that it should not be established. The friends of that system, grasping at too much, frustrated their own aim; and lost in the struggle for exclusive authority, their influence in religion, and their importance in politics. In the righteous retribution of Providence, those who had refused to grant political existence to others, finally lost their own.

The account of the leading parties in the nation at this period, would be incomplete without noticing another—the Baptists. This body also attracted the attention of Baxter, and as he distinguished himself in several controversies with its ministers, it is gratifying to find him record the following opinion of its character: "For the Anabaptists themselves, though I have written and said so much against them, as I found that most of them were persons of zeal in religion, so many of them were sober, godly people, who differed from others but in the point of infant baptism, or, at most, in the points of predestination, free-will, and perseverance. And I found in all antiquity, that though infant baptism was held lawful by the church, yet some, with Tertullian and Nazianzen, thought it most convenient to make no haste; and the rest left the time of baptism to every one's liberty, and forced none to be baptized: insomuch as not only Constantine, Theodosius, and such others as were converted at the years of discretion, but Augustine, and many such as were the children of Christian parents (one or both), did defer their baptism much longer than I think they should have done. So that, in the primitive church, some were baptized in infancy, and some in ripe age, and some a little before their death; and none were forced, but all left free; and the only penalty of their delay was, that so long, they were without the privileges of the church, and were numbered but with the catechumens or expectants." [m] I believe there were no Baptists in the Assembly, though they had existed long before, were then in considerable number in the country, and could rank among themselves many excellent, and a few learned persons.

Having thus exhibited Baxter's particular views of the great leading parties which then constituted the religious world, the following summing up, by himself, is particularly worthy of attention:—"Among all these parties, I found that some were naturally of mild, calm, and gentle dispositions; and some of sour, froward, passionate, peevish, or furious natures. Some were young,

[m] Life, part ii. pp. 140, 141.

raw, and inexperienced, and these were like young fruit, sour and harsh; addicted to pride of their own opinions, to self-conceitedness, turbulency, censoriousness, and temerity; and to engage themselves for a cause and party before they understood the matter. They were led by those teachers and books that had once won their highest esteem, judging of sermons and persons by their fervency more than by the soundness of the matter and the cause. Some I found, on the other side, to be ancient and experienced Christians, that had tried the spirits, and seen what was of God, and what of man, and noted the events of both in the world. These were like ripe fruit, mellow and sweet; 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; who, being makers of peace, did sow the fruits of righteousness in peace.'

"But I found not all these alike in all the disagreeing parties, though some of both sorts were in every party. The Erastian party was mostly composed of lawyers, and other secular persons. The Diocesan party consisted of some grave, learned, godly bishops, and some sober, godly people of their mind; and, withal, of almost all the carnal politicians, temporizers, profane, and haters of godliness, in the land, and all the rabble of the ignorant, ungodly vulgar. Whether this came to pass from any thing in the nature of their diocesan government, or from their accommodating the ungodly sort by the formal way of their public worship, or from their heading and pleasing them by running down the stricter sort of people whom they hated; or all these together; and also because the worst and most do always fall in with the party that is uppermost, I leave to the judgment of the considerate reader. The Presbyterian party consisted of grave, orthodox, godly ministers, together with the hopefulest of the students and young ministers, and the soberest, godly, ancient Christians, who were equally averse to persecution and to schism; and of those young ones who were educated and ruled by these; as, also, of the soberest sort of the well-meaning vulgar who liked a godly life, though they had no great knowledge of it. This party was most desirous of peace.

"The Independent party had many very godly ministers and people, but with them many young, injudicious persons; inclined much to novelties and separations, and abounding more in zeal than knowledge; usually doing more for subdivisions than the

few sober persons among them could do for unity and peace; too much mistaking the terms of church communion, and the difference between the regenerate (invisible), and the congregate (or visible) church.

"The Anabaptist party consisted of some (but fewer) sober, peaceable persons, and orthodox in other points; but, withal, of abundance of young, transported zealots, and a medley of opinionists, who all hasted directly to enthusiasm and subdivisions, and by the temptation of prosperity and success in arms, and the policy of some commanders, were led into rebellions and hot endeavours against the ministry, and other scandalous crimes; and brought forth the horrid sects of Ranters, Seekers, and Quakers, in the land." [n]

In this description of parties we observe some of the marked peculiarities of Baxter. He was obviously disposed to do justice to all, and ready to acknowledge true religion wherever he found it; but a little more zeal in some particulars, than was suited to his taste, was enough to induce him to speak more strongly of the parties than the case justified: besides, he was influenced not only by what he witnessed himself, but by what he heard from others. While he was acute and candid, he was credulous; more disposed to listen to vague and injurious reports than a man of his piety and experience ought to have been: but, after all, the picture that he draws of the parties which left the church is, on the whole, advantageous to them. It is evident that he considered there was a large preponderance of genuine religion among each; which far more than outweighed all the dross and alloy belonging to them. They who imagine there was nothing but sectarian zeal, guided and excited by political frenzy, entirely mistake the true state of things. There was much real religion in the parties which professed it, though mixed up with a great deal of what tended to injure it, or occasion misconception of its nature.

Baxter was so fully convinced of the prevalence of true religion among the persons composing the leading parties, that he made it much of the business of his life to convince them, that they differed less from each other than they themselves supposed, and to induce them to act together in Christian fellowship. "I thought it my duty," he says, "to labour to bring them all to a concordant practice of so much as they were agreed in; to set all that together which was true and good

[n] Life, part ii. pp. 144—146.

among them all, and to reject the rest; and especially to labour to revive Christian charity, which faction and disputes had lamentably extinguished."[o] This object he prosecuted in the most indefatigable manner, by conversation, preaching, writing, and disputing; and though he often complains of disappointment, and deplores the divisions of the period, his success in uniting all parties in the town of Kidderminster, was complete; and his influence over the serious people of the county at large, very considerable.

Having given, chiefly in Baxter's words, an account of the leading religious parties of the period, I consider this the best place to introduce his remarks on the minor sects; some of which had but an ephemeral existence, while others have increased, extended, and still remain. I feel it to be my duty to record his statements, many of which are very curious, though I fear they are not always sufficiently free from the influence of that prejudice and credulity to which I have just adverted.

The variety of religious sects which sprung up during the period of which we are now treating, has been a fruitful topic of reproach and exultation to infidels and worldly ecclesiastics. The former of these classes glory in the fanaticism of the sects, as a proof of the absurdity of all religion whatever; the others refer to it as a beacon to warn men of the danger of departing from established faith and forms. Infidels forget, however, that sects, and enthusiastic ones too, are not confined to Christians. The elegant mythology of Greece and Rome presented, in the deities of a thousand groves and streams, any thing but a unity of opinion or worship; while the conduct of the worthies of those elegant superstitions, so far from indicating the influence of a sober rationality, exhibited "all monstrous, all prodigious things." Nor were the haunts of philosophy in ancient, or the schools of philosophy in modern times, more free from sects and schisms, and from fierce and angry contentions. Ecclesiastics should remember that unity is the boast of the Romish church, and division her reproach of Protestantism. Not that she is entitled to the claim of unity, or to fling the reproach of discord at others. She has her sects and her quarrels too. It is not to the discredit of the reformation that it gave rise to a diversity of opinion and practice among the reformers themselves, and afforded an opportunity for the manifestation of errors and improprieties which they all deplored. The excitement produced by that

[o] Life, part i. p. 144.

glorious event was not likely to spend all its force on the minds which were capable of bearing it without injury; it was necessarily extended to others, whose passions or imaginations were more powerful than their understandings. On such men, the pure fire which burned on the Protestant altar became wild fire; not warming by its genial heat, or consuming evil by its steady flame, but scorching, and vagrant; destroying in its fury both friends and foes.

It cannot be matter of surprise that the civil commotions of England, which were but the bursting forth of a volcano, that had long been burning in secret, should be attended with similar effects. The convulsion which overturned the throne, overwhelmed the church, and nearly destroyed the constitution, was a shock which even the most powerful minds could scarcely sustain. It was natural to regard it as the crisis of religion as well as of politics, and to contemplate in it the approach or commencement of a new and splendid era. Politicians, astrologers, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, as well as theologians, felt its power. Few comparatively of any class, could "sit on a hill apart," and contemplate, with calm serenity, the whirlwind and the storm which were then raging; still fewer were capable of directing them, or of reducing the conflicting elements to order and harmony; and of those who made the attempt, not a few perished in it, or only exposed themselves to the insult and mockery which their imbecile temerity justly deserved.

Religion, from its infinitely greater importance than all other things, necessarily wrought most powerfully in these circumstances on those who were concerned for its interests. The zeal of such persons, was not always in proportion to the strength or the correctness of their judgment. It was not too fervent, had it been sufficiently enlightened; but being, in many instances, in the inverse ratio of knowledge and prudence, it produced all sorts of wild and eccentric movements. We deplore that this should have been the case; but it is foolish to be surprised, or to sneer, at it. Circumstances produced sects in religion as they produced parties in politics: they formed heresies in the church as they created false theories in the state. If fanatics and heresiarchs abounded, so did quack doctors, and political empyrics. Spiritual nostrums were not more numerous or discordant than astrological conundrums, and philosophical dreams and visions. Let Baxter's account of the following sects be read under the influence of these remarks, and nothing will appear either unaccountable or extraordinary.

"In these times," referring particularly to the period of the Rump Parliament, "sprang up five sects, at least, whose doctrines were almost the same, but they fell into several shapes and names: the Vanists; the Seekers; the Ranters; the Quakers; the Behmenists." Of each of these, we are furnished with a short account.

"The Vanists, for I know not by what other name to make them known, were Sir Harry Vane's disciples; and first sprang up under him in New England, when he was governor there. Their notions were then raw and undigested, and their party quickly confounded by God's providence; as you may see in a little book of Mr. Thomas Weld's, of the rise and fall of Antinomianism and Familism in New England.[p] Sir Harry Vane being governor, and found to be the secret promoter and life of the cause, was fain to steal away by night, and take shipping for England, before his year of government was at an end.

"When he came over into England, he proved an instrument of greater calamity to a people more sinful and more prepared for God's judgments. Being chosen a parliament man, he was very active at first for the bringing of delinquents to punishment. He was the principal person who drove on the parliament to go too high, and act too vehemently against the king: and being of very ready parts, and very great subtilty, and unwearied industry, he laboured, not without success, to win others in parliament, city, and country, to his way. When the Earl of Strafford was accused, he got a paper out of his father's cabinet (who was secretary of state) which was the chief means of his condemnation. To most of our changes, he was that *within* the House, which Cromwell was *without*. His great zeal to drive all into war, and to cherish the sectaries, especially in the army, made him, above all men, to be valued by that party.

"His unhappiness lay in this, that his doctrines were so cloudily formed and expressed, that few could understand them, and therefore he had but few true disciples. The Lord Brook was slain before he had brought him to maturity: Mr. Sterry was thought to be of his mind, as he was his intimate friend; but was so famous for obscurity in preaching, being, said Sir Benjamin Rudiard, too high for this world, and too low for the

[p] I have not inserted all that Baxter says about New England. The foolish story about Mrs. Dyer is a proof only of the malevolence or folly of the inventors. Weld's book is the production of a weak, prejudiced man, and entitled to little respect as authority.

other, that he thereby proved almost barren also; and *vanity* and *sterility* were never more happily conjoined.[q] Mr. Sprigge is the chief of his more open disciples; and too well known by a book of his sermons.[r]

"This obscurity was imputed by some, to his not understanding himself; but, by others, to design, because he could speak plainly when he listed. The two courses, in which he had most success, and spake most plainly, were his 'Earnest Plea for Universal Liberty of Conscience, and against the Magistrates intermeddling with Religion;' and his teaching his followers to revile the ministry, calling them, ordinarily, blackcoats, priests, and other names which then savoured of reproach; and those gentlemen that adhered to the ministry, they said, were priest-ridden.

"When Cromwell had served himself by him, as his surest friend, as long as he could, and gone as far with him as their

[q] Baxter's opinion of Sterry underwent a great change after this punning passage was written. He thus speaks of him in his 'Catholic Theology:' "It is long since I heard of the name and fame of Mr. Peter Sterry. His common fame was, that his preaching was such as few, or none, could understand, which increased my desire to have heard him, of which I still missed, though I often attempted it. But now since his death, while my book is in the press, a posthumous tract of his cometh forth, of Free Will: upon perusal of which, I found in him the same notions as in Sir Harry Vane; but all handled with much more strength of parts, and rapture of highest devotion, and greater candour toward all others, than I expected. His preface is a most excellent persuasive to universal charity. Love was never more extolled than throughout this book. Doubtless, his head was strong, his wit admirably pregnant, his searching studies hard and sublime, and, I think, his heart replenished with holy love to God, and great charity, moderation, and peaceableness towards men: insomuch, that I heartily repent that I so far believed fame as to think somewhat hardlier of him and his few adherents, than I now think they deserve." —*Cath. Theol.* part iii. p. 107.

While this passage does great credit to the candour and honesty of Baxter, it shows us with what caution we ought to receive his opinions of the sectaries of the Commonwealth. Sterry has, like many of the men of that period, been most unrighteously abused. He was mystical; but so were Fenelon, Madam Guion, Henry More, and many others, whose talents and piety have never been questioned. His works prove that he was no fool, and his conduct shows that he was not a knave. He was a man of a highly poetical mind, which soared far above the turbulent atmosphere by which he was surrounded, and most of the creatures who floated in it. His work on the Will, to which Baxter refers, is written with ability, though some parts of it are not very intelligible.

[r] The book of Sermons by Sprigge, to which Baxter refers, is, I suppose, his 'Testimony to an approaching Glory; being an Account of certain Discourses lately delivered in Pancras, Soperlane, London.' 12mo. 1649. The worst which can be said of these discourses is, that they are somewhat mystical; otherwise they are creditable both to the piety and talents of their author.

way lay together (Vane being for a fanatic democracy, and Cromwell for monarchy), at last, there was no remedy but they must part; and when Cromwell cast out the Rump, he called Vane a juggler, and Martin a whoremonger, to excuse his usage of the rest.

When Vane was thus laid by, he wrote his book, called 'The Retired Man's Meditations,' wherein the best part of his opinions are so expressed as will make but few men his disciples. His 'Healing Question' is more plainly written.

"When Cromwell was dead, he got Sir Arthur Haselrigge to be his close adherent on civil accounts, procured the Rump to be set up again, with a council of state, and got the power much into his own hands. When he was in the height of this power, he set upon the forming of a new commonwealth, and, with some of his adherents, drew up the model, which was for popular government; but so that men of his confidence must be the people.

"Of my own displeasing him, this is the true account. It grieved me to see a poor kingdom tossed up and down in unquietness, the ministers made odious, and ready to be cast out, a reformation trodden underfoot, and parliament and piety made a scorn, while scarce any doubted but he was the principal spring of all. Therefore, being writing against the Papists, and coming to vindicate our religion against them, when they impute to us the blood of the king, I fully proved that the Protestants, and particularly the Presbyterians, abhorred it, and suffered greatly for opposing it; and that it was the act of Cromwell's army, and the sectaries, among which I named the Vanists as one sort. I showed that the Friars and Jesuits were the deceivers, and, under several vizors, were dispersed among the people. Mr. Nye having told me that Vane was long in Italy, I said it was considerable how much of his doctrine he had brought from Italy; whereas it appeared that he was only in France, and Helvetia, upon the borders of Italy. By mistake, it was printed *from* Italy. I had ordered the printer to correct it 'towards Italy;' but, though the copy was corrected, the impression was not. Hereupon Sir Henry Vane, being exceedingly provoked, threatened me to many, and spake against me in the House; and one Stubbs (that had been whipped in the Convocation House at Oxford) wrote for him a bitter book against me. He from a Vanist, afterwards turned a Conformist: since that, he turned physician; and was drowned in a small puddle, or brook, as he was riding, near Bath.[s]

[s] Henry Stubbs, according to Anthony Wood, was "the most noted person

"I confess my writing was a means to lessen his reputation, and make men take him for what Cromwell, who better knew him, called him, a juggler. I only wish I had done so much in time; but the whole land rang of his anger and my danger; and all expected my present ruin by him; but to show him that I was not about recanting, as his agents would have persuaded me, I wrote also against his 'Healing Question,' in a preface before my 'Holy Commonwealth;' and the speedy turn of affairs did tie his hands from executing his wrath upon me.

"Upon the king's coming in, he was questioned; along with others, by the Parliament, but seemed to have his life secured; but being brought to the bar, he spake so boldly in justifying the Parliament's cause, and what he had done, that it exasperated the king, and made him resolve upon his death. When he came to Tower Hill to die, and would have spoken to the people, he began so resolutely as caused the officers to sound the trumpets and beat the drums, and hinder him from speaking. No man could die with greater appearance of gallant resolution and fearlessness than he did, though before supposed a timorous man; insomuch that the manner of his death procured him more applause than all the actions of his life. And when he was dead, his intended speech was printed, and afterwards his opinions more plainly expressed by his friend than himself.

of his age." He was the son of a minister, and a protégé of Sir Henry Vane's, by whose aid he was educated at Oxford; where, through the influence of Owen, he was made one of the Keepers of the Bodleian Library. He possessed very considerable parts and learning. After passing through various changes, he became a physician, and finally settled down into regular connexion with the church. He wrote many pamphlets on all subjects. The book to which Baxter refers is, 'A Vindication of that Prudent and Honourable Knight, Sir Henry Vane, from the Lies and Calumnies of Mr. Richard Baxter, Minister of Kidderminster, in a Letter to the said Mr. Richard Baxter.' 1659. It was honourable to Stubbs to defend his friend and patron; but he ought to have treated Baxter with more courtesy. The story of his being whipp'd in the convocation, is probably entitled to little more attention than the whipping of Milton. The manner of his death proves nothing respecting his former life or character, and was perhaps owing to no fault of his, though Wood's account is written with his characteristic spleen, and evidently intended to insinuate that he was intoxicated. "He being at Bath attending several of his patients living in and near Warwick, then there, was sent for to come to another at Bristol in very hot weather: to which place, therefore, going a by-way, at ten of the clock in the night, on the twelfth day of July, in sixteen hundred and seventy-six (his head being then intoxicated with bibbing, but more with talking and snuffing of powder), was drowned passing through a shallow river, wherein, as 'tis supposed, his horse stumbled; two miles distant from Bath."—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1082.

"When he was condemned, some of his friends desired me to come to him, that I might see how far he was from Popery, and in how excellent a temper (thinking I would have asked him forgiveness for doing him wrong); I told them that if he had desired it, I would have gone to him; but seeing he did not, I supposed he would take it for an injury; as my conference was not likely to be such as would be pleasing to a dying man: for though I never called him a Papist, yet I still supposed he had done the Papists so much service, and this poor nation and religion so much wrong, that we and our posterity are likely to have cause and time enough to lament it. So much of Sir Henry Vane and his adherents.[t]

"The second sect which then rose up was that called Seekers. These taught that our Scripture was uncertain; that present miracles are necessary to faith; that our ministry is null and without authority, and our worship and ordinances unnecessary or vain; the true church, ministry, Scripture, and ordinances, being lost, for which they are now seeking. I quickly found that the Papists principally hatched and actuated this sect, and that a considerable number that were of this profession, were some Papists and some infidels. However, they closed with the Vanists, and sheltered themselves under them, as if they had been the very same.

"The third sect were the Ranters. These also made it their business, as the former, to set up the light of nature, in men, under the name of Christ, and to dishonour and cry down the church, the Scripture, the present ministry, and our worship and ordinances. They called men to hearken to Christ within them; but withal, they enjoined a cursed doctrine of libertinism, which brought them all to abominable filthiness of life. They taught, as the Familists, that God regardeth not the actions of the outward man, but of the heart; and that to the pure, all things are pure (even things forbidden): and so, as allowed by God, they spake most hideous words of blasphemy, and many of them committed whoredoms commonly.

[t] While I have extracted the greater part of Baxter's character of Sir Henry Vane, I cannot help expressing my decided opinion that it is, in various particulars, incorrect. Baxter did not understand him, and, therefore, could not do him justice. He was brave, sagacious, and disinterested; the ardent and enlightened friend of civil and religious liberty; distinguished in life by the decision of his piety, and in death (though basely murdered in violation of all faith and justice) by his calm yet heroic behaviour. The man who was feared by Cromwell, hated by Charles, and praised by Milton, could not have been a silly fanatic, or an unprincipled knave.

"There could never a sect arise in the world that was a louder warning to professors of religion to be humble, fearful, and watchful; never could the world be told more loudly, whither the spiritual pride of ungrounded novices in religion tendeth; and whither professors of strictness in religion, may be carried in the stream of sects and factions. I have seen myself, letters written from Abingdon, where, among both soldiers and people, this contagion did then prevail, full of horrid oaths, curses, and blasphemy, not fit to be repeated by the tongue or pen of man; and these all uttered as the effect of knowledge, and a part of their religion, in a fanatic strain, and fathered on the Spirit of God. But the horrid villanies of this sect, did not only speedily extinguish it, but also as much as ever any thing did, to disgrace all sectaries, and to restore the credit of the ministry, and of the sober, unanimous Christians; so that the devil and the Jesuits quickly found that this way served not their turn, and therefore they suddenly took another.

"And that was the fourth sect, the Quakers, who were but the Ranters, turned from horrid profaneness and blasphemy, to a life of extreme austerity, on the other side. Their doctrines were mostly the same with the Ranters; they made the light which every man hath within him to be his sufficient rule, and, consequently, the Scripture and ministry were set light by. They spake much for the dwelling and working of the Spirit in us, but little of justification, and the pardon of sin, and our reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. They pretend their dependence on the Spirit's conduct, against set times of prayer, and against sacraments, and against their due esteem of Scripture and ministry. They will not have the Scripture called the Word of God; their principal zeal lieth in railing at the ministers as hirelings, deceivers, false prophets, &c.; and in refusing to swear before a magistrate, or to put off their hat to any, or to say *you* instead of *thou* or *thee*, which are their words to all. At first they did use to fall into tremblings, and sometimes vomitings, in their meetings, and pretended to be violently acted on by the Spirit; but now that is ceased. They only meet, and he that pretendeth to be moved by the Spirit speaketh; and sometimes they say nothing, but sit an hour or more in silence, and then depart. One while divers of them went naked through several chief towns and cities of the land, as a prophetical act: some of them have famished and drowned themselves in melancholy; and others, undertaken, by the power of the Spirit, to raise the dead.

Their chief leader, James Nayler, acted the part of Christ, at Bristol, according to much of the history of the Gospel; and was long laid in Bridewell for it, and his tongue bored, as a blasphemer, by the Parliament.[u] Many Franciscan friars, and other Papists, have been proved to be disguised speakers in their assemblies, and to be among them; and it is like are the very soul of all these horrible delusions. But of late one William Penn is become their leader, and would reform the sect, and set up a kind of ministry among them.[x]

"The fifth sect are the Behmenists, whose opinions go much towards the way of the former, for the sufficiency of the light of nature, the salvation of heathens, as well as Christians, and a dependence on revelations, &c. But they are fewer in number, and seem to have attained to greater meekness, and conquest of passion, than any of the rest. Their doctrine is to be seen in Jacob Behmen's books, by those that have nothing else to do than to bestow a great deal of time to understand him that was not willing to be easily understood, and to know that his bombastic words signify nothing more than before was easily known by common familiar terms.[y]

[u] In the first volume of 'Burton's Diary,' lately edited by Mr. Towill Rutt, there is a curious account of the debate in parliament respecting Nayler. It lasted ten or eleven days. A horrible sentence was pronounced and inflicted; but he made a very narrow escape for his life, as several of the members were for passing sentence of death upon him. Burton was a witness of the execution of the sentence, and bears testimony to the fortitude with which Nayler bore it. The Protector, greatly to his honour, interested himself on Nayler's behalf. The conduct of the House of Commons was as unconstitutional as its sentence was brutal and unmerited.

[x] Baxter's account of the Quakers, like his representations of the other sects to which he was opposed, must be received with some abatement, and with due allowance for the exaggerations to which various parts of the conduct of some of the early Friends naturally gave rise. They wished to carry reformation further than most of the parties of the period approved; they were powerfully influenced by the doctrine of impressions, for which they so strenuously contended; their zeal was roused to the very utmost by the opposition which they experienced; and which, operating on some peculiarly-excited minds, produced, at least, temporary insanity. This was probably the case with James Nayler, and a few others, whose conduct the Friends would now be far from approving; and whose severe and unmerited sufferings reflect indelible disgrace on the parties who inflicted them. The heroic and persevering conduct of the Quakers in withstanding the interferences of government with the rights of conscience, by which they finally secured those peculiar privileges they so richly deserve to enjoy, entitles them to the veneration of all the friends of civil and religious freedom; and more than compensates for those irregularities and extravagancies which marked the early period of their history.

[y] The writings of Jacob Behmen are probably better known now and more

"The chief of the Behmenists, in England, are Dr. Pordage and his family, who live together in community, and pretend to hold visible and sensible communion with angels, whom they sometimes see, and sometimes smell. Mr. Fowler, of Reading, accused him, before the committee, for preaching against imputed righteousness, and various other things, especially for familiarity with devils, and conjuration. The doctor wrote a book to vindicate himself, in which he professeth to have sensible communion with angels, and to know, by sights and smells, good spirits from bad. He saith, that indeed one month his house was molested with evil spirits, which was occasioned by one Everard, whom he taketh to be a conjurer, who staid so long with him, as desiring to be of their communion. In this time, a fiery dragon, so big as to fill a very great room, conflicted with him, visibly, many hours; one appeared to him in his chamber, in the likeness of Everard, with boots, spurs, &c.; and an impression was made on the brick wall of his chimney, of a coach drawn with tigers and lions, which could not be got out till it was hewed out with pickaxes: and another on his glass window, which yet remaineth, &c. Whether these things be true or false, I know not.[z]

"Among these, fall in many other sect-makers, as Dr. Gell, of London, known partly by a printed volume, in folio;[a] and one

admired than they were in the days of Baxter. William Law and John Wesley both contributed, especially the first, to gain some credit for them in England. Jacob was a very harmless enthusiast, or rather madman, whose dreams and visions bewildered himself, and the revelation of them bewildered others. That he should have found admirers in such a period of excitement as that which England experienced during the Commonwealth, cannot be matter of surprise, when we find that he obtained followers in the quiet reign of the Georges. Those who do not choose to misspend their time in the examination of his mystical conundrums, will find enough of the same in the works of Law; or may amuse themselves by looking at a small life of Behmen, by his devoted admirer, Francis Okely, formerly of St. John's College, Cambridge. 1780.

[z] It is surprising Baxter should not have perceived that Dr. Pordage was fitter for occupying a place in Bedlam, than to rank as the head or leader of a sect. If madmen are to be reckoned sect-makers, we might reckon sects without number, in all ages and places. Granger says of him, very justly, "He was far gone in one of the most incurable kinds of madness, the frenzy of enthusiasm;" yet was he a doctor in philosophy, medicine, and theology!

[a] Dr. Gell, of whom Baxter speaks, appears to have been a very singular man. He published two folio volumes on the Scriptures: the one in 1659; the other appeared after his death, in 1676. He was rector of St. Mary, Aldermanbury. His works are a curious mass of learning, occasional original, interpretation of the Scriptures, and mystical speculation, often of a very peculiar nature. But men of a similar cast of mind have appeared in every age.

Mr. Parker, who got in with the Earl of Pembroke, and wrote a book against the 'Assembly's Confession,' in which he taketh up most of the Popish doctrines, and riseth up against them with papal pride and contempt, but owneth not the pope himself. Yet he headeth his body of doctrine with the Spirit, as the Papists do with the pope.[b] To these also must be added Dr. Gibbon, who goeth about with his scheme to proselyte men, whom I have more cause to know than some of the rest.[c]

"All these, with subtile diligence, promote most of the papal cause, and get in with the religious sort, either upon pretence of austerity, mortification, angelical communion, or clearer light; but none of them yet owneth the name of a Papist; but what they are, indeed, and who sendeth them, and what is their work, though I strongly conjecture, I will not assert, because I am not fully certain: let time discover them."[d]

[b] Parker's book on the Assembly's Catechism, I once had in my possession. He appears to have been a concealed Papist; and, partly on Popish, and partly on Arminian principles, attacks the doctrines of the Westminster Confession. But it is quite a mass of confusion.

[c] The person to whom Baxter here refers, was Dr. Nicholas Gibbon, who, after the Restoration, became rector of Corfe Castle. He was a busy, forward royalist. The following curious account of his intercourse with Baxter, which is given in another part of his life, explains the allusion here made to him. It is probable that Baxter knew enough of him; but he was more a man of intrigue than the maker of a sect.

"While I lodged at Lord Broghill's, a certain person was importunate to speak with me, Dr. Nic. Gibbon, who, shutting the doors on us, that there might be no witnesses, drew forth a scheme of theology, and told me how long a journey he had once taken towards me, and engaged me patiently to hear him open to me his scheme, which he said was the very thing that I had been long groping after; and contained the only terms and method to resolve all doubts whatever in divinity, and unite all Christians through the world: and there was none of them printed but what he kept himself, and he communicated them only to such as were prepared, which he thought I was. 1. Searching; 2. Impartial; and, 3. A lover of method. I thanked him, and heard him above an hour in silence; and, after two or three days' talk with him, I found all his frame, the contrivance of a very strong head-piece, was secretly and cunningly fitted to usher in a Socinian Popery, or a mixture of Popery and half-Socinianism. Bishop Usher had before occasionally spoken of him in my hearing as a Socinian, which caused me to hear him with suspicion; but I heard none suspect him of Popery, though I found that it was that which was the end of his design. This juggler hath this twenty years, and more, gone up and down thus secretly, and also thrust himself into places of public debate (as when the bishops and divines disputed before the king at the Isle of Wight, &c.); and when we were lately offering our proposals for concord to the king, he thrust in among us: till I was fain, plainly, to detect him before some of the Lords, which enraged him; and he denied the words which, in secret, he had spoken to me. Many men of parts and learning are perverted by him."—*Life*, part ii. pp. 205, 206.

[d] Life, part i. p. 74—78.

After this account of the several sects and their leaders, it will be proper to quote a portion of the general reflections which Baxter makes upon them. "These are they," he says, "who have been most addicted to church divisions, and separations, and sidings, and parties, and have refused all terms of concord and unity: who, though many of them weak and raw, were yet prone to be puffed up with high thoughts of themselves, and to overvalue their little degrees of knowledge and parts, which set them not above the pity of understanding men. They have been set upon those courses which tend to advance them above the common people in the observation of the world, and to set them at a further distance from others than God alloweth, and all this under the pretence of the purity of the church. In prosecution of their ends, there are few of the Anabaptists that have not been the opposers and troublers of the faithful ministers of God in the land, and the troublers of their people, and hinderers of their success; strengthening the hands of the profane. The sectaries, especially the Anabaptists, Seekers, and Quakers, chose out the most able, zealous ministers, to be the marks of their reproach and obloquy, and all because they stood in the way of their designs, and hindered them in the propagating their opinions. They set against the same men as the drunkards and swearers set against, and much after the same manner, reviling them, and raising up false reports of them, and doing all that they could to make them odious, and at last attempting to pull them all down; only they did it more profanely than the profane, in that they said, Let the Lord be glorified, let the Gospel be propagated; and abused and profaned Scripture, and the name of God, by prefixing him to their faction and miscarriages. Yea, though they thought themselves the most understanding and conscientious people of the land, yet did the gang of them seldom stick at any thing which seemed to promote their cause; but whatever their faction in the army did, they pleaded for and approved it. If they pulled down the parliament, imprisoned the godly, faithful members, and killed the king; if they cast out the Rump, if they chose a little parliament of their own; if they set up Cromwell; if they raised up his son, and pulled him down again; if they sought to obtrude agreements on the people; if they one week set up a council of state, and if another week the Rump were restored; if they sought to take down tithes and parish ministers, to the utter confusion of religion in the land: in all these

the Anabaptists, and many of the Independents in the three kingdoms, followed them, and even their pastors were ready to lead them to consent.

"I know the same accusations are laid by some in ignorance and malice, against many that are guilty of no such things, and, therefore, some will be offended with me, and say I imitate such reproaches; but shall none be reproved because some are slandered? Shall hypocrites be free from conviction and condemnation, because wicked men call the godly hypocrites? Wo to the man that hath not a faithful reprover! but a thousand woes will be to him that hateth reproof! Wo to them that had rather sin were credited and kept in honour, than their party dishonoured; and wo to the land where the reputation of men doth keep sin in reputation! The Scripture itself will not spare a Noah, a Lot, a David, an Hezekiah, a Josiah, a Peter; but will open and shame their sin to all generations. Yet, alas! the hearts of many, who it is to be hoped are truly religious, will rise against him that shall tell them of the misdoings of those of their opinion, and call them to repentance. The poor church of Christ, the sober, sound religious part, are like Christ, that was crucified between two thieves. The profane and formal persecutors, on one hand, and the fanatic, dividing sectaries on the other, have in all ages been grinding the spiritual seed, as the corn is ground between the millstones. And though their sins have ruined themselves and us, and silenced so many hundred ministers, and scattered the flocks, and made us the hatred and scorn of the ungodly world, and a by-word, and desolation in the earth, yet there are few of them who lament their sin, but justify themselves and their misdoings; and the penitent malefactor is unknown to us. And seeing posterity must know what they have done, to the shame of our land and of our sacred profession, let them know thus much more, also, to their own shame, that all the calamities which have befallen us by our divisions were long foreseen by many: and they were told and warned of them year after year. They were told that a house divided against itself could not stand; and that the course they took would bring them to shame, and turn a hopeful reformation into a scorn, and make the land of their nativity a place of calamity and wo: but the warning signified nothing to them; these ductile professors blindly followed a few self-conceited teachers to this misery, and no warning or means could ever stop them."[e]

[e] Life, part i. pp. 102, 103.

Such is the curious account which Baxter gives of the extraordinary state of religion, and of religious parties, during this singular period of England's history. His opportunities to become acquainted with the state of things, were very considerable, and his veracity unquestionable. Yet I cannot help thinking that a worse opinion may be formed of the state of religion from what he has said, than the real circumstances will justify. The language of many would lead us to suppose that during what Milton calls ironically "the year of sects and schisms," those sects and schisms were almost innumerable. The uncouth designations employed to describe them, by such persons as Edwards, Vicars, Pagitt, and Featley, have furnished many a joke, and led to many an exaggerated description. But when the matter comes to be examined, a great deal of this mist, in which the period is enveloped, is cleared away. Baxter's own account, which discovers no disposition to conceal or extenuate, shows, that beside the leading religious parties, which were composed mostly of respectable persons, there were only five other sects that he could describe. Even these so ran into one another that he could not accurately discriminate them. With the exception of the Quakers, none of the rest is entitled to be spoken of as a distinct or separate sect. All the others appear to have consisted of a small number of floating individuals, who had no defined religious system, and who enjoyed an existence and influence of the most ephemeral nature. Most of the leaders were harmless and inoffensive in their lives; men whose hearts were better than their understandings; and who were, in some cases, rendered mischievous, chiefly by the treatment which they experienced.[f]

These sects and heresies are often represented as hatched and spawned during the Commonwealth, and constituting its disgrace; they are also alleged to stamp the character of that much-misrepresented period of our history. It should be remembered, however, that when liberty runs riot, it is generally when it has been preceded by oppression and tyranny. Persecution and restraint have often been the real parents of those opinions, which are sometimes truly extravagant, and at other

[f] "Old Ephraim Pagitt," as he calls himself, describes, in his 'Heresiography,' between forty and fifty different sects; but the whole of these may be reduced to a very few, as he makes many foolish distinctions. For instance, he has *Anabaptists*, and *Plunged Anabaptists; Separatists, and Semi-separatists*. He has *Brownists*, *Barrowists*, *Ainsworthians*, *Robinsonians*, who were all men of one party. He has *Familists*, *Castalian Familists*, *Familists of the Mountains*, and *Familists of the Vallies!* Such is a specimen of the wisdom and the multiplying power of Old Ephraim Pagitt.

times only regarded as such by the dominant party; which liberty has not created but only brought to light. That the sudden bursting of the bonds of civil and ecclesiastical slavery should be attended with some temporary evils, is only what might be expected. Who thinks of blaming the emancipated captive, for a few freaks and a little wildness, when first breathing the air of heaven? These are but indications of powerful emotion, which, when familiar with his new circumstances, will subside into a delightful calm. The strong representations of gross immoralities alleged to be practised by some of the members of the sects referred to, will go but a little way with those who know how the primitive believers were misrepresented, and what treatment the reformers experienced. Charges of this kind have been commonly preferred against the followers of new sects, they therefore always require to be very fully authenticated before they are believed.

Baxter's notion that most of these sects were either projected or instigated by Papists, seems not sustained by any satisfactory evidence. He was full of alarms on this subject; and from what he knew of the deceitful nature of Popery, he was prepared to give it credit for any mystery of iniquity. That the priests and Jesuits were disposed to aggravate rather than mitigate the evils which then existed, cannot be doubted. But the leaders of the religious parties of the Commonwealth, were not the tools with which they could safely work.

If we look around on the state of parties at present, we shall perhaps be convinced that sects and schisms are more numerous than even in the time of the Commonwealth, and not a few of them quite as extravagant. What, then! Is this a proof that we have no religion, or of the evil and danger of religious freedom? No, certainly. But, let an attempt be made to hinder exertion, and put down sects, and we should find all the alleged evils of fanaticism and schism, aggravated and multiplied a thousandfold.

The divisions of the Christian church are undoubtedly much to be deplored. They present a most unseemly appearance to the world, of that religion which may be said to be "one and indivisible." They imply much imperfection on the part of its professors, occasion great stumbling to unbelievers, and impair the energy and resources which might be advantageously employed in assailing the common enemy. The causes of these divisions are to be sought in the ignorance, the weakness, and

the prejudices of Christians; in indolent submission to authority on one part, and the love of influence on another; in the power of early habits and associations; and, above all, in the influence of a worldly spirit, which warps and governs the mind in a thousand ways.

While the evil of this state of things is freely admitted, it is possible to exaggerate both the extent of the divisions which exist, and the injuries which result from them. There is more oneness of mind among real Christians than a superficial observer might suppose. Baxter was quite correct in maintaining that they differ more about words than things. In their views of leading doctrines, in the experience of their influence, in the practical effects of Christianity, and in their expectations of its future glory, there is a substantial agreement among them.

In the wise and gracious administration of God, even these imperfections are overruled, and rendered productive of important good. They afford opportunity for the exercise of the Christian virtues of forbearance, patience, and love; they put the tempers and profession of men to the test; and they often excite a spirit of emulation, which, though not unmixed with evil, is the means of extensive benefit to others. It is worthy of observation that all attempts to produce uniformity, have either been defeated; or have occasioned fresh divisions. Under the appearance of outward unity, the greatest diversity of opinion generally prevails. And genuine religion flourishes most amidst what is commonly denounced as the contentions of rival sects. The soil whose rankness sends forth an abundant crop of weeds, will produce, if cultivated, a still more luxuriant harvest of corn. If the times of Baxter were fruitful of sects, and some of them wild and monstrous, they were still more fruitful in the number of genuine, holy, and devoted Christians. It was not an age of fanaticism only, but of pure and undefiled religion.

CHAPTER V.

1646—1660.

Baxter resumes his Labours at Kidderminster—His account of Public Affairs till the Death of Charles I.—His conduct while in Kidderminster towards Parliament—Towards the Royal Party—His Ministry at Kidderminster—His Employments—His Success—His Advantages—Remarks on the style of his preaching—His public and private exertions—Their lasting effects.

In the fourth chapter, a full account is given of the views and conduct of Baxter while he was connected with the victorious army of the Commonwealth. His exertions to promote its spiritual interests, were indefatigable and disinterested. With the most patriotic principles and aims, he devoted himself to counteract, what he considered the factious and sectarian dispositions of the soldiers and their leaders; while he experienced nothing but sorrow and disappointment as the fruit of his labours. His bodily health, always feeble and broken, at length sunk under the pressure of his circumstances, and he was compelled reluctantly to retire from the stormy atmosphere of a camp to the calmer region of a pastoral cure.

The preceding chapter details the origin, character, and influence, of the principal and the minor religious parties which made a figure during the civil wars, or enjoyed an ephemeral notoriety during the Commonwealth. To all that concerned both the civil and religious interests of his country, Baxter was powerfully alive. He had the soul of a patriot as well as of a Christian; and often was he ready to weep tears of blood over the civil confusion and the religious distractions of his country. Yet were these halcyon days, in regard to the enjoyment of religious privileges, compared with those which preceded and followed them.

After various digressions he thus resumes his personal narative: "I have related how after my bleeding a gallon of blood by the nose, that I was left weak at Sir Thomas Rous's house, at Rous-Lench, where I was taken up with daily medicines to prevent a dropsy: and being conscious that my time had not been improved

to the service of God as I desired it had been, I put up many an earnest prayer, that God would restore me, and use me more successfully in his work. Blessed be that mercy which heard my groans in the day of my distress; which wrought my deliverance when men and means failed, and gave me opportunity to celebrate his praise.

"Whilst I continued there, weak and unable to preach, the people of Kidderminster had again renewed their articles against their old vicar and his curate. Upon trial of the cause, the committee sequestered the place, but put no one into it; and placed the profits in the hands of divers of the inhabitants, to pay a preacher till it were disposed of. These persons sent to me and desired me to take it, in case I were again enabled to preach; which I flatly refused, and told them I would take only the lecture which, by the vicar's own consent and bond, I held before. Hereupon they sought Mr. Brumskill and others to accept the place, but could not meet with any one to their minds: they, therefore, chose Mr. Richard Serjeant to officiate, reserving the vicarage for some one that was fitter.

"When I was able, after about five months' confinement, to go abroad, I went to Kidderminster, where I found only Mr. Serjeant in possession; and the people again vehemently urged me to take the vicarage. This I declined; but got the magistrates and burgesses together into the townhall, and told them, that though I had been offered many hundred pounds per annum elsewhere, I was willing to continue with them in my old lecturer's place, which I had before the wars, expecting they would make the maintenance a hundred pounds a year, and a house; and if they would promise to submit to that doctrine of Christ, which as his minister I should deliver to them, I would not leave them. That this maintenance should neither come out of their own purses, nor any more of it out of the tithes, save the sixty pounds which the vicar had before bound himself to pay, I undertook to procure an augmentation for Milton (a chapel in the parish) of forty pounds per annum. This I afterwards did; and so the sixty pounds and that forty pounds were to be my part, and the rest I should have nothing to do with. The covenant was drawn up between us in articles, and subscribed; in which I disclaimed the vicarage and pastoral charge of the parish, and only undertook the lecture.

"Thus the sequestration continued in the hands of the townsmen, as aforesaid, who gathered the tithes and paid me (not a

hundred as they promised) but eighty pounds per annum, or ninety at most, and house-rent for a few rooms at the top of another man's house, which was all I had at Kidderminster. The rest they gave to Mr. Serjeant, and about forty pounds per annum to the old vicar; six pounds per annum to the king and lord for rents, and a few other charges.

"Beside this ignorant vicar, there was a chapel in the parish, where was an old curate as ignorant as he, that had long lived upon ten pounds a year and the fees of celebrating unlawful marriages. He was also a drunkard and a railer, and the scorn of the country. I knew not how to keep him from reading, though I judged it a sin to tolerate him in any sacred office. I got an augmentation for the place, and an honest preacher to instruct them, and let this scandalous fellow keep his former stipend of ten pounds for nothing; yet could never keep him from forcing himself upon the people to read, nor from celebrating unlawful marriages, till a little before death did call him to his account. I have examined him about the familiar points of religion, and he could not say half so much to me as I have heard a child say.

"These two in this parish were not all: in one of the next parishes called 'The Rock,' there were two chapels, where the poor ignorant curate of one got his living by cutting faggots, and the other by making ropes. Their abilities being answerable to their studies and employments."[s]

Such were the circumstances in which Baxter resumed his labours in Kidderminster. He was the man of the people's choice, and enjoyed his right to the vicarage of the parish, had he been disposed to avail himself of it by the sequestration of the parliamentary commissioners. It is true he had no legal episcopal title; and of this his enemies took advantage another day; but it is very certain he had no hand in ejecting the former incompetent incumbent, or in forcing himself upon the people as his successor. The appointment of the existing Government therefore, or of a body acting under its sanction, was sufficient authority to justify his taking possession of the cure, and to support his complaint of unjust treatment when subsequently refused liberty to preach in the parish by Bishop Morley. That money was not Baxter's object, is evident from the nature of his engagement; and from his afterwards offering to continue his labours *gratis*, if he might only be permitted to

[s] Life, part i. pp. 79, 80.

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preach and live among the people, no doubt can be entertained of his disinterested love to the work of Christ.

Before proceeding to state the nature and results of his ministry in the place where he was honoured by God to effect so much good, it will be proper, for the sake of connecting the public events of the times, to advert to some important occurrences which took place immediately after he left the army, and during the earlier period of his second residence in Kidderminster. Leaving, for a little, the narrative of his personal affairs, he thus proceeds:

"I must now look back to the course and affairs of the king; who, after the siege of Oxford, having no army left, and knowing that the Scots had more loyalty and stability in their principles than the sectaries, resolved to cast himself upon them, and so escaped to their army in the North. The Scots were very much troubled at this honour that was cast upon them, for they knew not what to do with the king. To send him back to the English parliament, seemed unfaithfulness, when he had cast himself upon them; to keep him, they knew would divide the kingdoms, and draw a war upon themselves from England, which they knew they were now unable to sustain. They kept him, therefore, awhile among them with honourable entertainment, till the parliament sent for him; and they saw that the sectaries and the army were glad of it, as an occasion to make them odious, and to invade their land. Thus the terror of the conquering army made them deliver him to the parliament's commissioners upon two conditions: 1. That they should promise to preserve his person in safety and honour, according to the duty which they owed him by their allegiance. 2. That they should presently pay the Scots army one half what was due to them for their service, which had been long unpaid.[h]

"Hereupon the king being delivered to the parliament, they

[h] The treaty for the payment of the Scottish arrears, and that for the delivering up of the king, were quite distinct in themselves, though they proceeded together. Baxter is also mistaken when he says, the king was given up on the two conditions, which he specifies. He was delivered up without any conditions. The objects of the English Parliament, and of the Scottish Parliament, were the same; the covenant and the propositions. The king's life could not be supposed to be in danger, but from such a concussion of party, and such an ascendancy of persons totally different from those with whom the negotiation was going on, as would have rendered all conditions nugatory. In fact, the life of the king, at this time, was safer among the English than among the Scots; some of whom had conceived the idea of bringing him to the scaffold for his obstinate refusal to agree to the terms of the covenant.—*Brodie*, iv. 74; *Godwin*, ii. 257.

appointed Colonel Richard Greaves, Major-General Richard Brown, with others, to be his attendants, and desired him to abide awhile at Holmby House, in Northamptonshire. While he was here, the army was hatching their conspiracy; and, on the sudden, one Cornet Joyce, with a party of soldiers, fetched away the king, notwithstanding the parliament's order for his security. This was done as if it had been against Cromwell's will, and without any order or consent of theirs; but so far was Joyce from losing his head for such a treason, that it proved the means of his preferment;[1] and so far was Cromwell and his soldiers from returning the king in safety, that they detained him among them and kept him with them, till they came to Hampton Court, and there they lodged him under the guard of Colonel Whalley, the army quartering all about him. While he was here, the mutable hypocrites[k] pretended an extraordinary care of the king's honour, liberty, safety, and conscience. They blamed the austerity of the parliament, who had denied him the attendance of his own chaplains; and of his friends in whom he took most pleasure. They gave liberty to his friends and chaplains to come to him; and pretended that they would save him from the incivilities of the parliament and the Presbyterians.

"Whether this was while they tried what terms they could make with him for themselves, or while they acted any other part, it is certain that the king's old adherents began to extol the army, and to speak against the Presbyterians more distastefully than before. When the parliament offered the king propositions for concord, which Vane's faction made as high and unreasonable as they could, that they might come to nothing,[l] the army, forsooth, offered him proposals of their own, which the king liked better: but which of them to treat with he did not

[1] Charles was well pleased to accompany Joyce, and afterwards refused to return at the command of Fairfax. He was, in fact, glad to be out of the hands of the Presbyterians.—*Godwin*, ii. p. 320. The great object of seizing the king, was to prevent a coalition between him and the Presbyterian party.

[k] It was the mutable hypocrisy of Charles, rather than of Cromwell, that frustrated every amicable arrangement. Had he been but steady to any one scheme of moderate policy, he would have lost neither his throne nor his life. His scheme, on all occasions, was to make the best bargain he could, till he got his enemies into his hands, when it was his determination to destroy them. Unfortunately for him they discovered this, and acted accordingly.

[l] The defeat of an adjustment between Charles and his Parliament, at this time, was owing to Hollis, and not to Vane and his party. See Brodie's 'History of the British Empire,' vol. iv. pp. 96, 100.

know. At last, on the sudden, the judgment of the army changed, and they began to cry for justice against the king; and, with vile hypocrisy, to publish their repentance, and cry God's mercy for their kindness to the king, and confess that they were under a temptation: but in all this, Cromwell and Ireton, and the rest of the council of war, appeared not. The instruments of all this work, must be the common soldiers. Two of the most violent sectaries in each regiment are chosen by them, by the name of agitators,[m] to represent the rest in these great affairs. All these together made a council, of which Colonel James Berry was the president, that they might be used, ruled, and dissolved, at pleasure. No man that knew them, will doubt whether this was done by Cromwell's and Ireton's direction. This council of agitators take not only the parliament's work upon themselves, but much more; they draw up a paper called 'The Agreement of the People,' as the model or form of a new commonwealth. They have their own printer, and publish abundance of wild pamphlets, as changeable as the moon. The thing contrived, was an heretical democracy. When Cromwell had awhile permitted them thus to play themselves, partly to please them, and confirm them to him, and chiefly to use them in his demolishing work; at last he seemed to be so much for order and government, as to blame them for their disorder, presumption, and headiness, as if they had done it without his consent. This emboldened the parliament not to censure them as rebels, but to rebuke them, and prohibit them, and claim their own superiority; and while the parliament and the agitators were contending, a letter was secretly sent to Colonel Whalley to intimate that the agitators had a design suddenly to surprise and murder the king. Some thought that this was sent from a real friend; but most thought it was contrived by Cromwell to frighten the king out of the land, or into some desperate course which might give them advantage against him. Colonel Whalley showed the letter to the king, which put him into much fear of such ill-governed hands; so that he secretly got horses, and slipped away towards the sea with two of his confidents only. On coming to the sea, near Southampton, they were disappointed of the vessel which they expected to trans-

[m] The original name of these persons was *adjutators*, a branch of the same word with *adjutant*, and altogether different from *agitator*, to which it was afterwards converted. Brodie ascribes the conduct of the soldiers, on this occasion, to the intrigues of Hollis, and the Presbyterian party, rather than to the policy of Cromwell, according to Baxter.—*Hist.* iv. 86, 87.

port them; and so were fain to pass over into the Isle of Wight, and his majesty was commited to the trust of Colonel Robert Hammond, who was governor of a castle there. For a day or two all were amazed to think what had become of the king; and then a letter from the king to the house, acquainted them that he was fain to flee thither from the cruelty of the agitators, who, as he was informed, thought to murder him; and urging them to treat about ending all these troubles. But here Cromwell had the king in a pinfold, and was more secure of him than before.[n]

"When at the Isle of Wight, the parliament sent him some propositions, to be consented to in order to his restoration. The king granted many of them; and some he granted not. The Scottish commissioners thought the conditions more dishonourable to the king than was consistent with their covenant and duty, and protested against them; for which the parliament blamed them as hinderers of the desired peace. The chief thing which the king stuck at, was the utter abolishing of episcopacy and the alienating of the bishops' and the dean and chapter lands. Hereupon, with the commissioners, certain divines were sent down, to satisfy the king, viz.: Mr. Stephen Marshall, Mr. Richard Vines, Dr. Lazarus Seaman, &c., who were met by many of the King's divines, Archbishop Usher, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Sheldon, &c. The debates here being in writing, were published, and each party thought they had the better. The parliamentary divines came off with great honour.

"They seem to me, however, not to have taken the course which should have settled these distracted churches. Instead of disputing against all episcopacy, they should have changed diocesan prelacy into such an episcopacy as the conscience of the king might have admitted, and as was agreeable to that which the church had in the two or three first ages. I confess Mr. Vines wrote to me, as their excuse in this and other matters of the Assembly, that the parliament tied them up from treating or disputing of any thing at all, but what they appointed or

[n] There is no evidence whatever that the king's flight from Hampton Court was owing to any secret plot of Cromwell's, or to any fear of being murdered, entertained by his majesty. He was probably advised to it by Cromwell, who was then afraid of the proceedings of the army; but it was a plan of the king's own, intended to create increased confusion and distraction among his opponents, which he expected to be able to turn to his own advantage. Milton, in his 'Second Defence of the People of England,' vindicates Cromwell from the charge of advising the flight of Charles, or being a party to it. I have not observed the story of the secret letter adverted to by any other writer than Baxter.

proposed to them: but I think plain dealing with such leaders had been best; and to have told them, this is our judgment, and, in the matters of God and his church, we will serve you according to our judgment, or not at all. Though, indeed, as they were not of one mind among themselves, this could not be expected.[o]

"Archbishop Usher there took the right course, who offered the king his *reduction* of episcopacy to the form of presbytery. He told me himself, that, formerly, the king had refused it, but, at the Isle of Wight, he accepted it; and as he would not when *others* would, so *others* would not when *he* would. So also, when Charles II. came in, we tendered Usher's scheme of union to him; but then he would not. Thus the true, moderate, healing terms are always rejected by those that stand on the higher ground, though accepted by them that are lower and cannot have what they will: from whence it is easy to perceive whether prosperity or adversity, the highest or the lowest, be ordinarily the greater hinderer of the church's unity and peace. I know, that if the divines and parliament had agreed for a moderate episcopacy with the king, some Presbyterians of Scotland would have been against it, and many Independents of England; and the army would have made it the matter of odious accusations and clamours: but all this ought not to have deterred foreseeing, judicious men, from those healing counsels which must close our wounds whenever they are closed.[p]

"The king, sending his final answers, the parliament had a long debate upon them, whether to acquiesce in them as a sufficient ground for peace. Many members spake for resting in them, and, among others, Mr. Prynne went over all the king's concessions in a speech of divers hours long, with marvellous

[o] A full and impartial account of the negotiations held at the Isle of Wight, is given by Neal, iii. pp. 422, 443, edit. 1822. The treaty failed from the obstinacy of the king, acting by the advice of his episcopal counsellors, who were either incapable of giving suitable advice in difficult circumstances, or not aware of the peril to which they were exposing their royal master, who foolishly imagined he could save himself at any time by closing either with the Parliament or the army. It would probably have been better had there been no divines on either side.

[p] If any thing is calculated to expose the folly and danger of state interference with religion, it is the fact, that the peace of three kingdoms and the fate of the king were made to depend, in a great measure, on the establishment of an exclusive form of church government. There were, doubtless, other things at the root of the misunderstanding, but the main ostensible reason of the failure of the treaty, was the demand on the one part, and the refusal on the other, to abolish episcopacy, and establish presbytery in its place.

memory, and showed the satisfactoriness of them all. So that the house voted that the king's concessions were a sufficient ground for a personal treaty with him; and suddenly gave a concluding answer, and sent for him up. But at such a crisis it was time for the army to bestir themselves. Without any more ado, Cromwell and his confidents sent Colonel Pride with a party of soldiers to the house, and set a guard upon the door: one part of the house, who were for them, they let in; another part they turned away, and told them that they must not come there; and the third part they imprisoned. To so much rebellion, perfidiousness, perjury, and impudence, can error, selfishness, and pride of great successes, transport men of the highest pretences to religion.[q]

"For the true understanding of all this, it must be remembered, that though in the beginning of the parliament there was scarce a noted, gross sectary known, but Lord Brook, in the House of Peers, and young Sir Harry Vane, in the House of Commons; yet, by degrees, the number increased in the lower house. Major Salloway and some few others, Sir Henry Vane had made his own adherents: many more were carried part of the way to Independency and liberty of religions; and many that minded not any side in religion, did think that it was not policy ever to trust a conquered king, and therefore were wholly for a parliamentary government. Of these, some would have lords and commons, or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy; others would have commons and democracy alone; and some thought that they ought to judge the king for all the blood that had been shed. Thus, when the two parts of the house were ejected and imprisoned, the third part, composed of the Vanists, the Independents, and other sects, with the democratical party, was left by Cromwell to do his business under the name of the Parliament of England; which, by the people in scorn, was commonly called the Rump of the Parliament. The secluded and imprisoned members published a writing, called their Vindication; and some of them would afterwards have thrust into the House, but the guard of soldiers kept them

[q] The account which Mrs. Hutchinson gives of this affair, is very different from Baxter's. She imputes the whole blame of acceding to the terms proposed by the king, the army's interference with Parliament, and the consequent ruin of the king, to the conduct of the Presbyterian leaders, who, instigated by hatred of the Independents and other sects, consented to measures which would have reinstated Charles without any adequate security to his subjects: by which they would all eventually have been destroyed.—*Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson*, 297—300. Whitelock and Ludlow agree with Mrs. Hutchinson.

out, and the Rump were called the *honest men.* And these are the men that henceforward we have to do with in the progress of our history as called The Parliament.[r]

"As the Lords were disaffected to these proceedings, so were the Rump and soldiers to the Lords; so that they passed a vote, supposing that the army would stand by them, to establish the government without a king and House of Lords; and thus the Lords were dissolved, and these Commons sat and did all alone. Being deluded by Cromwell, and verily thinking that he would be for democracy, which they called a commonwealth, they gratified him in his designs, and themselves in their disloyal distrusts and fears. They accordingly called a high court of justice to be erected, and sent for the king from the Isle of Wight. Colonel Hammond delivered him, and to Westminster Hall he came, and refusing to own the court and their power to try him, Cook, as attorney, having pleaded against him, Bradshaw, as president and judge, recited the charge, and condemned him.[s] Before his own gate at Whitehall, they erected a scaffold; and, in the presence of a full assembly of people, beheaded him. In all this appeared the severity of God, the mutability and uncertainty of worldly things, the fruits of a sinful nation's provocations, the infamous effects of error, pride, and selfishness, prepared by Satan, to be charged hereafter upon reformation and godliness, to the unspeakable injury of the Christian name and Protestant cause, the rejoicing and advantage of the Papists, the hardening of thousands against the means of their own salvation, and the confusion of the actors when their day should come.

[r] Through the whole of these statements, Baxter ascribes a great deal too much to the craft of Cromwell, and the intrigues of the sectaries. Allowing that they often compensated their lack of power by superior address and rapidity of movement, it should not be forgotten that self-preservation is the first law of man; and that, as the sectaries were in danger of being crushed between two powerful parties, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, they naturally exerted themselves to prevent the ascendancy of either. Had there been more integrity in the one class, and more moderation in the other, Cromwell and his party would have had a less difficult part to play: as things were, they probably accomplished much less by previous intrigue and plotting, than by taking advantage of unforeseen occurrences.

[s] The reader who thinks of Bradshaw only as a regicide and a ruffian, would do well to consult the character given of him by Milton, in his 'Defence of the People of England.' An admirable translation of the passage will be found in 'Symmons' Life of Milton,' pp. 220—222. Bradshaw escaped to America, and there ended his days in peace. Cook expiated his political offence on the scaffold, and died with all that lofty heroism which distinguished men who felt that they suffered not for personal guilt, but for the crime of the people of England.

"The Lord General Fairfax all this while stood by, and, with high resentment, saw his lieutenant do all this by tumultuous soldiers, tricked and overpowered by him; neither being sufficiently upon his guard to defeat the intrigues of such an actor; nor having resolution enough to lay down the glory of all his conquests, and forsake him. At the King's death, he was in wonderful perplexities, and when Mr. Calamy and some ministers were sent for to resolve him, and would have further persuaded him to rescue the King, his troubles so confounded him, that his servants durst let no man speak to him: and Cromwell kept him, as it was said, in praying and consulting till the stroke was given, and it was too late to make resistance. But not long after, when war was determined against Scotland, he laid down his commission, and never had to do with the army more; and Cromwell become General in his stead.[t]

"If you ask, What did the ministers all this while? I answer, they preached and prayed against disloyalty; they drew up a writing to the Lord General, declaring their abhorrence of all violence against the person of the King, and urging him and his army to take heed of such an unlawful act. They presented it to the General when they saw the King in danger; but pride prevailed against their counsels."[u]

Some difference of opinion may exist in regard to the correctness of all the statements and reasonings of the preceding extracts. One thing, however, is very apparent,—the devoted royalty of Baxter. While he acted with the army of the Parliament, and advocated the cause which he considered it had undertaken, he was indignant at its conduct, when it assumed the sovereign power, and threatened the life of the king. In the treatment which Charles experienced, Baxter seems to forget every thing, but the sufferings which he endured and the unconstitutional conduct of his adversaries. The death of that ill-fated monarch, he regarded less as the result of his own obstinacy and duplicity, of which all parties were furnished with indubitable proofs, or as the just retribution of Heaven for these and many other evils of himself and his family, than as illustrations of the bad principles and wicked conduct of sectaries and

[t] There seems something very absurd in the idea that Fairfax was ignorant of what all the country knew, that the death of the king was determined; and that he was hoaxed by Cromwell and Harrison till it was accomplished. Brodie examines the story with his usual diligence and acuteness.—*Hist. of the Brit. Emp.* iv. p. 213—216.

[u] Life, part i. pp. 60—64.

agitators. He denounces the hypocrisy and perfidy of Cromwell and his party, and represents them as systematically pursuing the destruction of the king. They are justly liable to the charge of dissimulation. But it should not be forgotten that it attaches to the royal party and to its head, in a far greater degree. The struggle which was at first for freedom on the one side, and for absolute power on the other, became, at last, a struggle for life, on both sides. The final catastrophe, therefore, deeply as it is to be lamented, became inevitable. The Presbyterians would have restored the king, at different periods of the contest, if he would have abolished episcopacy, and established presbyterian uniformity in its stead. They were prevented from doing so, partly by the scheming of Charles, and partly by the opposition of the army. The Independents would have restored him, could they have obtained any security for themselves, and the freedom of their religion. They could not trust the king for the one, or the Presbyterians for the other. Charles played with and deceived all parties, till at length he fell a sacrifice to his own obstinacy and insincerity.

The full discussion of the difficult and complicated subject to which the preceding paragraphs relate would be foreign, from the nature and design of this work; which is intended rather as a record of the opinions and testimony of Baxter, than of my own sentiments. On many points, we are now capable of forming more correct views than any individual could, in the times of Baxter. We are less under the influence of prejudice; we have more accurate information; and are, therefore, capable of looking at all the transactions with more impartiality. I beg to refer the reader, who wishes for full and enlightened views on all the events of the civil wars and the Commonwealth, to the work of Brodie, which I have often referred to in the notes. It is distinguished by laborious research, great acuteness, and most praiseworthy impartiality. If that work is not at hand, the 'History of the Commonwealth,' by Godwin, will amply supply its place. It also is entitled to the praise of discrimination and impartiality. Equity requires I should state, that both these writers differ considerably from Baxter in their views of the principles and conduct of the several parties who figured in the distracted period of which they treat.

Baxter himself, while these tremendous scenes were transacting, lived remote from the parties principally engaged in them. He could only speak and reason according to the reports which

reached him, the probability or improbability of which he usually determined by the personal knowledge which he had of those to whom they related. Though deeply concerned in all that affected his country's weal, he was now better employed than in contending with the turmoils of a camp, or in sounding and exposing the policy of courts.

During the early part of his second residence at Kidderminster, several other circumstances are recorded by Baxter worthy of being mentioned, both as illustrating his own character and the state of the period. He opposed the solemn league and covenant, though he had formerly taken it at Coventry, and, therefore, did not please the Presbyterians: he opposed the engagement, and thus incurred the displeasure of the Independents. Careful only to stand well with his own conscience, it was matter of indifference to him who were his friends or who were his foes.

"For my own part," he says, "though I kept the town and parish of Kidderminster from taking the covenant, seeing how it might become a snare to their consciences; yea, and most of Worcestershire beside, by keeping the ministers from offering it in any of the congregations to the people, except in Worcester city, where I had no great interest, and knew not what they did; yet I could not judge it seemly for him that believed there is a God, to play fast and loose with a dreadful oath, as if the bonds of national and personal vows were as easily shaken off as Sampson's cords.

"I therefore spake and preached against the engagement, and dissuaded men from taking it. The first hour that I heard of it, being in company with some gentlemen of Worcestershire, I presently wrote down above twenty queries against it, intending as many more almost against the obligation, as those were about the sense and circumstances. One that was present got the copy of them, and, shortly after, I met with them verbatim, as his own, in a book of Mr. Henry Hall's, who was long imprisoned for writing against Cromwell." [u]

That Baxter was the friend of the parliamentary cause notwithstanding, cannot be doubted; and that he was grateful for the protection which he enjoyed under the existing government, is equally unquestionable; yet he was adverse to the measures pursued in opposition to Charles II., whose right to the throne he fully believed, and carried his conscientious opposition to the commonwealth-government so far, that it might have been at-

[u] Life, part i. p. 64.

tended with serious consequences to himself. He was, in fact, a royalist in principles and constitution; and a friend to the parties who opposed the king, from necessity, and not from choice.

"When the soldiers were going against the king and the Scots, I wrote letters to some of them, to tell them of their sin; and desired them at last to begin to know themselves. They were the same men who had boasted so much of love to all the godly, and pleaded for tender dealing with them, and condemned those that persecuted them or restrained their liberty, who were now ready to imbrue their swords in the blood of such as they acknowledged to be godly; and all because they dared not be as perjured or disloyal as they were. Some of them were startled at these letters, and thought me an uncharitable censurer, who would say that they could kill the godly, even when they were on the march to do it: for how bad soever they spake of the cavaliers (and not without too much desert as to their morals), they confessed, that abundance of the Scots were godly men. Afterwards, however, those that I wrote to better understood me.

"At the same time, the Rump, or Commonwealth, which so much abhorred persecution, and were for liberty of conscience, made an order that all ministers should keep certain days of humiliation, to fast and pray for their success in Scotland: and that we should keep days of thanksgiving for their victories; and this upon pain of sequestration! So that we all expected to be turned out; but they did not execute it upon any, save one, in our parts. For myself, instead of praying and preaching for them, when any of the committee or soldiers were my hearers, I laboured to help them to understand, what a crime it was to force men to pray for the success of those who were violating their covenant and loyalty, and going, in such a cause, to kill their brethren:—what it was to force men to give God thanks for all their bloodshed, and to make God's ministers and ordinances vile, and serviceable to such crimes, by forcing men to run to God on such errands of blood and ruin:—and what it is to be such hypocrites as to persecute and cast out those that preach the Gospel, while they pretend the advancement of the Gospel, and the liberty of tender consciences, and leave neither tenderness nor honesty in the world, when the guides of the flocks and preachers of the Gospel shall be noted to swallow down such heinous sins.[x]

[x] Only one opinion can be entertained respecting the fearless honesty of Baxter, but the wisdom as well as the prudence of his behaviour may be

"My own hearers were all satisfied with my doctrine, but the committee-men looked sour, yet let me alone. The soldiers said, I was so like Love,[y] that I would not be right till I was shorter by the head. Yet none of them ever meddled with me, farther than by the tongue; nor was I ever by any of them in those times forbidden or hindered to preach one sermon, except only one assize sermon, which the high sheriff had desired me to preach, and afterwards sent me word to forbear, as from the committee; which told Mr. Moor, the Independent preacher at the college, that they desired me to forbear, and not to preach before the judges, because I preached against the state. But afterwards they excused it, as done merely in kindness to me, to keep me from running myself into danger and trouble."[z]

Notwithstanding his conduct towards the leaders and soldiers of the Commonwealth, various circumstances show that Baxter was by no means disposed to promote the interests of the royal cause. After detailing the affairs of Cromwell and the army in Scotland, and the march of Charles with the royal army into England, he says:—

"The greater part of the army passed close by Kidderminster, and the rest through it. Colonel Graves sent two or three messages to me, as from the king, to come to him; and after, when he was at Worcester, some others were sent: but I was at that time under so great an affliction of sore eyes, that I was scarcely able to see the light, and unfit to stir out of doors. Being not much doubtful of the issue which followed, I thought, if I had been able, it would have been no service at all to the king, it being so little, on such a sudden, that I could add to his assistance.

"When the king had stayed a few days at Worcester, Cromwell came with his army to the east side of the city, and after

very justly questioned. To take the side of the Parliament as he had done, and now to oppose the existing Government so publicly, while prosecuting the object of the original contest, was rather extraordinary. It is a great *proof* of the moderation of that Government, that it let him pass without molestation.

[y] The Presbyterian minister who was executed by Cromwell, for corresponding with the King. It is probable he was put to death rather as an example and a warning to others, than on account of any great criminality in his own conduct. Much influence was used to obtain his life, but all in vain. He was certainly a martyr to Presbyterian loyalty. "He died," says Baxter, "neither timorously nor proudly in any desperate bravado; but with as great alacrity and fearless quietness and freedom of speech, as if he had but gone to bed, and had been as little concerned as the standers by." Life, part i. p. 67.

[z] Life, part i. pp. 66, 67.

that, made a bridge of boats over the Severn, to hinder them from foraging on the other side; but because so great an army could not long endure to be pent up, the king resolved to charge Cromwell's men. At first, the Scottish foot charged very gallantly, some chief persons among the horse, the Marquis of Hamilton, late Earl of Limerick, being slain: but, at last, the hope of security so near their backs, encouraged the king's army to retreat into the city, and Cromwell's soldiers followed them so close at the heels, that Major Swallow, of Whalley's regiment, first, and others after him, entered Sidbury gate with them; and so the whole army fled through the city, quite away, many being trodden down and slain in the streets; so that the king was fain to fly with them northward. The Lord Wilmot, the Earl of Lauderdale, and many others of his lords and commanders, fled with him. Kidderminster being but eleven miles from Worcester, the flying army passed some of them through the town, and some by it. I had nearly gone to bed when the noise of the flying horses acquainted us with the overthrow; and a piece of one of Cromwell's troops, that guarded Bewdley bridge, having tidings of it, came into our streets, and stood in the open market-place, before my door, to surprise those that passed by. So, when many hundreds of the flying army came together, and the thirty troopers cried *stand,* and fired at them, they either hastened away, or cried quarter, not knowing in the dark what number it was that charged them. Thus as many were taken there, as so few men could lay hold on: and, till midnight, the bullets flying towards my door and windows, and the sorrowful fugitives hastening by for their lives, did tell me the calamitousness of war.

"The king, parted at last from most of his lords, went to Boscobel, by the White Ladies, where he was hid in an oak, in a manner sufficiently declared to the world; and thence to Mosely, and so, with Mrs. Lane, away as a traveller, and escaped all the searchers' hands, till he came safe beyond sea, as is published at large by divers."[a]

This brief notice of public affairs, and of Baxter's conduct in relation to them, to the period when the Commonwealth and Cromwell reigned triumphant, sufficiently prepares us for the interesting account given by him of his labours and success in Kidderminster. Perhaps no part of these memoirs is so important as this. It presents an admirable view of the man of

[a] Life, part i. pp. 110, 111.

God, abundant in labours, patient in tribulation, persevering in the exercise of faithfulness, benevolence, and long-suffering, and crowned with extraordinary success. Without ascribing too much to the agent, or expressing unqualified approbation of all the means employed, it is impossible not to perceive the adaptation of the instrument to the work, or to doubt that the divine blessing rested upon the measures pursued. The sovereignty of God operates not independently of human means and instrumentality, but in connexion with them; and it will rarely if ever be found, that suitably qualified agents pursue, in a right spirit and with Christian zeal, the good of men, without being rewarded by a corresponding measure of success. The circumstances in which Baxter found Kidderminster when he first went to it, as well as the difficulties and troubles which he had to encounter during the two years he then resided in it, have been already stated. Ignorance, immorality, and opposition to the Gospel, prevailed among all classes. His doctrine was unpalatable, his manner of life and hostility to vice and irreligion, in every form, still more so. His politics, favouring as they did the cause of the Parliament, and of church reform, increased the dislike, and produced personal violence. The conduct of the common people, influenced by all these things, was so outrageous, that he was finally compelled to leave them. This state of things must be connected with his account of the wonderful change in the character of the place, which he was honoured to effect.

After a long account of some remarkable deliverances, and of his bodily weakness, with which it is marvellous that he should have been able to struggle, he thus proceeds:—

"I shall next record to the praise of my Redeemer, the comfortable employment and success which he vouchsafed me during my abode at Kidderminster, under all these weaknesses. And, 1st. I will mention my employment. 2. My successes. And, 3. Those advantages by which, under God, they were procured.

"Before the wars, I preached twice each Lord's day; but after the war, but once, and once every Thursday, beside occasional sermons. Every Thursday evening, my neighbours who were most desirous, and had opportunity, met at my house, and there one of them repeated the sermon; afterwards they proposed what doubts any of them had about the sermon, or any other case of conscience; and I resolved their doubts. Last of

all, I caused sometimes one and sometimes another of them to pray, to exercise them; and sometimes I prayed with them myself: which, beside singing a psalm, was all they did. Once a week, also, some of the younger sort, who were not fit to pray in so great an assembly, met among a few more privately, where they spent three hours in prayer together. Every Saturday night, they met at some of their houses, to repeat the sermon of the former Lord's day, and to pray and prepare themselves for the following day. Once in a few weeks, we had a day of humiliation on one occasion or other. Every religious woman that was safely delivered, instead of the old feastings and gossipings, if she was able, did keep a day of thanksgiving with some of her neighbours, with them praising God, and singing psalms, and soberly feasting together. Two days every week, my assistant and myself took fourteen families between us, for private catechising and conference; he going through the parish, and the town coming to me. I first heard them recite the words of the catechism, and then examined them about the sense; and, lastly, urged them, with all possible engaging reason and vehemency, to answerable affection and practice. If any of them were stalled through ignorance or bashfulness, I forbore to press them any further to answers, but made them hearers, and either examined others, or turned all into instruction and exhortation. I spent about an hour with each family, and admitted no others to be present; lest bashfulness should make it burthensome, or any should talk of the weaknesses of others: so that all the afternoons on Mondays and Tuesdays I spent in this way, after I had begun it, (for it was many years before I did attempt it,) and my assistant spent the morning of the same day in the same employment. Before that, I only catechised them in the church, and conferred occasionally with an individual.

"Beside all this, I was forced, five or six years, by the people's necessity, to practise physic. A common pleurisy happening one year, and no physician being near, I was forced to advise them to save their lives; and I could not afterwards avoid the importunity of the town and country round about. Because I never once took a penny of any one, I was crowded with patients; so that almost twenty would be at my door at once: and though God, by more success than I expected, so long encouraged me, yet, at last, I could endure it no longer; partly because it hindered my other studies, and partly because the

very fear of miscuring and doing any one harm, did make it an intolerable burden to me. So that, after some years' practice, I procured a godly diligent physician to come and live in the town, and bound myself, by promise, to practise no more, unless in consultation with him, in case of any seeming necessity; and so with that answer I turned them all off, and never meddled with it again.

"But all these my labours (except my private conference with the families), even preaching and preparing for it, were but my recreation, and, as it were, the work of my spare hours; for my writings were my chief daily labour; which yet went the more slowly on, that I never one hour had an amanuensis to dictate to, and especially because my weakness took up so much of my time. All the pains that my infirmities ever brought upon me, were never half so grievous an affliction as the unavoidable loss of time which they occasioned. I could not bear, through the weakness of my stomach, to rise before seven o'clock in the morning, and afterwards not till much later; and some infirmities I laboured under, made it above an hour before I could be dressed. An hour, I must of necessity have to walk before dinner, and another before supper; and after supper I could seldom study: all which, beside times of family duties, and prayer, and eating, &c., left me but little time to study: which hath been the greatest external personal affliction of all my life.

"Every first Wednesday in the month was our monthly-meeting for parish discipline; and every first Thursday of the month, was the ministers' meeting for discipline and disputation. In those disputations it fell to my lot to be almost constant moderator; and for every such day, I usually prepared a written determination; all which I mention as my mercies and delights, and not as my burdens. Every Thursday, besides, I had the company of divers godly ministers at my house, after the lecture, with whom I spent that afternoon in the truest recreation, till my neighbours came to meet for their exercise of repetition and prayer.

"For ever blessed be the God of my mercies, who brought me from the grave, and gave me, after wars and sickness, fourteen years' liberty in such sweet employment! How strange that, in times of usurpation, I had all this mercy and happy freedom; when under our rightful king and governor, I, and many hundreds more, are silenced and laid by as broken vessels, and suspected and vilified as scarce to be tolerated to live privately and

quietly in the land! How mysterious, that God should make days of licentiousness and disorder under an usurper so great a mercy to me, and many a thousand more, who under the lawful governors which they desired, and in the days when order is said to be restored, do sit in obscurity and unprofitable silence, or lie in prisons; while all of us are accounted as the scum and sweepings, or offscourings of the earth.[b]

"I have mentioned my secret and acceptable employment; let me, to the praise of my gracious Lord, acquaint you with some of my success; and I will not suppress it, though I foreknow that the malignant will impute the mention of it to pride and ostentation. For it is the sacrifice of thanksgiving which I owe to my most gracious God, which I will not deny him, for fear of being censured as proud; lest I prove myself proud, indeed, while I cannot undergo the imputation of pride in the performance of my thanks for such undeserved mercies.

"My public preaching met with an attentive, diligent auditory. Having broke over the brunt of the opposition of the rabble before the wars, I found them afterwards tractable and unprejudiced. Before I entered into the ministry, God blessed my private conference to the conversion of some, who remain firm and eminent in holiness to this day: but then, and in the beginning of my ministry, I was wont to number them as jewels; but since then I could not keep any number of them. The congregation was usually full, so that we were fain to build five galleries after my coming thither; the church itself being very capacious, and the most commodious and convenient that ever I was in. Our private meetings, also, were full. On the Lord's days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets; but you might hear a hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through them. In a word, when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name, and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not one poor family in

[b] Baxter's 'Reformed Pastor' may be considered as a full illustration of the practice which he here describes as his own, connected with the principles by which it is recommended and enforced. Of that work I shall have occasion to speak in another place; it is only necessary to remark, at present, the consistency between the views which Baxter maintained with so much ardour, and the conduct which he himself pursued. Those who regard his views of the ministry as impracticable, have only to remember that Baxter, diseased, emaciated, and in deaths oft, exemplified the conduct which he so admirably describes.

the side that did not so; and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And in those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious.

"Though our administration of the Lord's Supper was so ordered as displeased many, and the far greater part kept away, we had six hundred that were communicants; of whom there were not twelve that I had not good hopes of as to their sincerity; those few who consented to our communion, and yet lived scandalously, were excommunicated afterwards. I hope there were also many who had the fear of God, that came not to our communion in the sacrament, some of them being kept off by husbands, by parents, by masters, and some dissuaded by men that differed from us. Those many that kept away, yet took it patiently, and did not revile us as doing them wrong: and those unruly young men who were excommunicated, bore it patiently as to their outward behaviour, though their hearts were full of bitterness.

"When I set upon personal conference with each family, and catechising them, there were very few families in all the town that refused to come; and those few were beggars at the town's ends, who were so ignorant, that they were ashamed it should be manifest. Few families went from me without some tears, or seemingly serious promises for a godly life. Yet many ignorant and ungodly persons there were still among us: but most of them were in the parish, and not in the town, and in those parts of the parish which were farthest from the town. And whereas one part of the parish was impropriate, and paid tithes to laymen, and the other part maintained the church, a brook dividing them, it fell out that almost all that side of the parish which paid tithes to the church, were godly, honest people, and did it willingly, without contestation, and most of the bad people of the parish lived on the other side. Some of the poor men did competently understand the body of divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies. Some of them were so able in prayer, that very few ministers did match them in order and fulness, and apt expressions, and holy oratory, with fervency. Abundance of them were able to pray very laudably with their families, or with others. The temper of their minds, and the innocency of their lives, were much more laudable than their parts. The professors of serious godliness were generally of very humble minds and carriage; of meek and quiet behaviour

unto others; and of blamelessness and innocency in their conversation.

"God was pleased also to give me abundant encouragement in the lectures I preached about in other places; as at Worcester, Cleobury, &c., but especially at Dudley and Sheffnal. At the former of which, being the first place that ever I preached in, the poor nailers, and other labourers, would not only crowd the church as full as ever I saw any in London, but also hang upon the windows and the leads without.

"In my poor endeavours with my brethren in the ministry, my labours were not lost; our disputatious proved not unprofitable. Our meetings were never contentious, but always comfortable; we took great delight in the company of each other; so that I know that the remembrance of those days is pleasant both to them and me. When discouragements had long kept me from motioning a way of church order and discipline, which all might agree in, that we might neither have churches ungoverned, nor fall into divisions among ourselves, at the first mentioning of it, I found a readier consent than I could have expected, and all went on without any great obstructing difficulties. When I attempted also to bring them all conjointly to the work of catechising and instructing every family by itself, I found a ready consent in most, and performance in many.

"I must here, then, to the praise of my dear Redeemer, set up this pillar of remembrance, even to his praise who hath employed me so many years in so comfortable a work, with such encouraging success. O what am I, a worthless worm, not only wanting academical honours, but much of that furniture which is needful to so high a work, that God should thus abundantly encourage me, when the reverend instructors of my youth did labour fifty years together in one place, and could scarcely say they had converted one or two in their parishes! And the greater was the mercy, because I was naturally of a discouraged spirit; so that if I had preached one year, and seen no fruits of it, I should hardly have forborne running away, like Jonah; but should have thought that God called me not to that place.

"Having related my comfortable success in this place, I shall next tell you by what and how many advantages this was effected, under that grace which worketh by means, though with a free diversity. I do it chiefly for their sakes who would know the means of other men's experiments in managing ignorant and sinful parishes.

" One advantage was, that I came to a people who never had any awakening ministry before, but a few formal cold sermons from the curate; for if they had been hardened under a powerful ministry, and been sermon proof, I should have expected less.

" I was then, also, in the vigour of my spirits, and had naturally a familiar moving voice, (which is a great matter with the common hearers), and doing all in bodily weakness as a dying man, my soul was the more easily brought to seriousness, and to preach as a dying man to dying men. For drowsy formality and customariness doth but stupify the hearers, and rock them asleep. It must be serious preaching, which will make men serious in hearing and obeying it.

" Another advantage was, that most of the bitter enemies of godliness in the town, who rose in tumults against me before, in their hatred of Puritans, had gone out into the wars, into the king's armies, and were quickly killed, and few of them ever returned again; and so there were few to make any great opposition to godliness.

" The change that was made in the public affairs also by the success of the wars, which, however it was done, and though much corrupted by the usurpers, was such as removed many and great impediments to men's salvation. Before, the rabble had boldness enough to make serious godliness a common scorn, and call them all Puritans and Precisians who cared not little for God, and heaven, and their souls, as they did; especially if a man was not fully satisfied with their undisciplined, disordered churches, or lay-chancellor's excommunications, &c. Then, no name was bad enough for him; and the bishops' articles inquiring after such, and their courts, and the high-commission grievously afflicting those who did but fast and pray together, or go from an ignorant, drunken reader, to hear a godly, able preacher at the next parish, kept religion among the vulgar under either continual reproach or terror; encouraging the rabble to despise and revile it, and discouraging those that else would own it. Experience telleth us that it is a lamentable impediment to men's conversion when it is a 'way everywhere spoken against,' and persecuted by superiors, which they must embrace; and when at their first approaches, they must go through such dangers and obloquy as is fitter for confirmed Christians to be exercised with, than unconverted sinners or young beginners. Though Cromwell gave liberty to all sects among us, and did not set up any party alone by force, yet this much gave abundant

advantage to the Gospel, removing the prejudices and the terrors which hindered it;[c] especially considering that godliness had countenance, and reputation also, as well as liberty. Whereas before, if it did not appear in all the fetters and formalities of the times, it was the common way to shame and ruin. Hearing sermons abroad, when there were none or worse at home; fasting and praying together; the strict observation of the Lord's day, and suchl-ike, went under the dangerous name of Puritanism, as much as opposing bishops and ceremonies.

"I know you may now meet with men who confidently affirm that all religion was then trodden down, and heresy and schism were the only piety; but I give warning to all ages by the experience of this incredible age, that they take heed how they believe any, whoever they be, while they are speaking for the interest of their factions and opinions, against those that were their real or supposed adversaries.[d]

"For my part I bless God, who gave me even under an usurper whom I opposed, such liberty and advantage to preach his Gospel with success, as I cannot have under a king to whom I have sworn and performed true subjection and obedience; yea, such as no age, since the Gospel came into this land, did before possess, as far as I can learn from history. I shall add this much more for the sake of posterity, that as much as I have said and written against licentiousness in religion, and for the magistrates' power in it; and though I think that land most happy whose rulers use their authority for Christ, as well as for the civil peace; yet, in comparison of the rest of the world, I shall think that land happy which hath but bare liberty to be as good as the people are willing to be. And if countenance and maintenance be but added to liberty, and tolerated errors and sects be but forced to keep the peace, and not to oppose the substantials of Christianity, I shall not hereafter much fear such toleration, nor despair that truth will bear down its adversaries.[e]

"Another advantage which I found, was the acceptation of

[c] Could the reader wish for a stronger testimony in favour of universal liberty than this? Religion prospered more under the Usurper than under the legitimate sovereign.

[d] It is important to connect this statement with Baxter's account given in the preceding chapter of the sects and heresies of the period. They are not at variance with each other. But to answer certain purposes, it is not uncommon to quote the worst representation of the case and to omit the other.

[e] Here the good sense and Christian feelings of Baxter, evidently get the better of all his theoretical notions of civil government and the magistrates' power in religion.

my person among the people. Though, to win estimation and love to ourselves only, be an end that none but proud men and hypocrites intend, yet it is most certain that the gratefulness of the person doth ingratiate the message, and greatly prepareth the people to receive the truth. Had they taken me to be ignorant, erroneous, scandalous, worldly, self-seeking, or such-like, I could have expected small success among them.

"Another advantage which I had, was the zeal and diligence of the godly people of the place. They thirsted after the salvation of their neighbours, and were in private my assistants, and being dispersed through the town, were ready in almost all companies to repress seducing words, and to justify godliness, convince, reprove, and exhort men according to their needs; as also to teach them how to pray; and to help them to sanctify the Lord's day. For those people who had none in their families who could pray, or repeat the sermons, went to their next neighbour's house who could do it, and joined with them; so that some of the houses of the ablest men in each street, were filled with them that could do nothing, or little, in their own.

"Their holy, humble, blameless lives were also a great advantage to me. The malicious people could not say, Your professors here are as proud and covetous as any; but the blameless lives of godly people did shame opposers, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and many were won by their good conversation.

"Our unity and concord were a great advantage to us; and our freedom from those sects and heresies, with which many other places were infected We had no private church, and though we had private meetings we had not pastor against pastor, or church against church, or sect against sect, or Christian against Christian.

"Our private meetings were a marvellous help to the propagating of godliness, for thereby, truths that slipped away, were recalled, and the seriousness of the people's minds renewed, and good desires cherished. Their knowledge, also, was much increased by them, and the younger sort learned to pray by frequently hearing others. I had also the opportunity of knowing their case; for if any were touched and awakened in public, I should frequently see them drop into our private meetings. Idle meetings and loss of time were greatly prevented; and so far were we from being by this in danger of schism, or divisions, that it was the principal means to prevent them: for

here I was usually present with them, answering their doubts, silencing objections, and moderating them in all.

"Another thing which advantaged us, was some public disputations which we had with gainsayers, which very much confirmed the people. The Quakers would fain have got entertainment, and set up a meeting in the town, and frequently railed at me in the congregation; but when I had once given them leave to meet in the church for a dispute, and, before the people, had opened their deceits and shame, none would entertain them more, nor did they get one proselyte among us.

"Another advantage, was the great honesty and diligence of my assistants. Another was the presence and countenance of honest justices of peace, who ordinarily were godly men, and always such as would be thought so, and were ready to use their authority to suppress sin and promote goodness.

"Another help to my success, was the small relief which my low estate enabled me to afford the poor; though the place was reckoned at near two hundred pounds per annum, there came but ninety pounds, and sometimes only eighty pounds to me. Beside which, some years I had sixty, or eighty pounds a year of the booksellers for my books: which little dispersed among them, much reconciled them to the doctrine that I taught. I took the aptest of their children from the school, and sent divers of them to the universities; where for eight pounds a year, or ten, at most, by the help of my friends, I maintained them. Some of these are honest, able ministers, now cast out with their brethren; but, two or three, having no other way to live, turned great Conformists, and are preachers now. In giving the little I had, I did not inquire whether they were good or bad, if they asked relief; for the bad had souls and bodies that needed charity most. And this truth I will speak to the encouragement of the charitable, that what little money I have now by me, I got it almost all, I scarce know how, at that time when I gave most, and since I have had less opportunity of giving, I have had less increase.

"Another furtherance of my work, was the books which I wrote, and gave away among them. Of some small books I gave each family one, which came to about eight hundred; and of the bigger, I gave fewer: and every family that was poor, and had not a Bible, I gave a Bible to. I had found myself the benefit of reading to be so great, that I could not but think it would be profitable to others.

"It was a great advantage to me, that my neighbours were of such a trade, as allowed them time enough to read or talk of holy things. For the town liveth upon the weaving of Kidderminster stuffs; and, as they stand in their looms, the men can set a book before them, or edify one another; whereas, ploughmen, and many others, are so wearied, or continually employed, either in the labours, or the cares of their callings, that it is a great impediment to their salvation. Freeholders and tradesmen are the strength of religion and civility in the land; and gentlemen, and beggars, and servile tenants, are the strength of iniquity. Though among these sorts, there are some also that are good and just, as among the other there are many bad. And their constant converse and traffic with London, doth much promote civility and piety among tradesmen.

"I found also that my *single life* afforded me much advantage: for I could the easier take my people for my children, and think all that I had too little for them, in that I had no children of my own to tempt me to another way of using it. Being discharged from most of family cares, and keeping but one servant, I had the greater vacancy and liberty for the labours of my calling.

"God made use of my practice of physic among them also as a very great advantage to my ministry; for they that cared not for their souls, did love their lives, and care for their bodies; and, by this, they were made almost as observant, as a tenant is of his landlord. Sometimes I could see before me in the church, a very considerable part of the congregation, whose lives God had made me a means to save, or to recover their health; and doing it for nothing so obliged them, that they would readily hear me.

"It was a great advantage to me, that there were at last few that were bad, but some of their own relations were converted: many children did God work upon, at fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age; and this did marvellously reconcile the minds of the parents and elder sort to godliness. They that would not hear me, would hear their own children. They that before could have talked against godliness, would not hear it spoken against, when it was their children's case. Many who would not be brought to it themselves, were proud that they had understanding, religious children; and we had some old persons of eighty years of age, who are, I hope, in heaven, and

the conversion of their own children, was the chief means to overcome their prejudice, and old customs, and conceits.

"Another great help to my success at last, was the formerly described work of personal conference with every family apart, with catechising and instructing them. That which was spoken to them personally, and which put them sometimes upon answers, awakened their attention, and was easier applied than public preaching, and seemed to do much more upon them.

"The exercise of church discipline was no small furtherance of the people's good: for I found plainly, that without it, I could not have kept the religious sort from separation and divisions.[f] There is something generally in their dispositions, which inclineth them to dissociate from open ungodly sinners, as men of another nature and society; and if they had not seen me do something reasonable for a regular separation of the notorious, obstinate sinners from the rest, they would irregularly have withdrawn themselves. It had not been in my power with bare words to satisfy them, when they saw we had liberty to do what we would. And so, for fear of discipline, all the parish kept off except about six hundred, when there were in all above sixteen hundred at an age to be communicants. Yet

[f] The entire want of discipline which has always characterised the Established Church, is one of its greatest blots. There is no separation whatever between the precious and the vile. The purity of Christian fellowship, or the distinction between the church and the world, can neither, therefore, be understood nor practised. On this subject, Baxter says, referring to the rise of the Puritans:—"There was scarcely any such a thing as church government or discipline known in the land, but only the harassing of those who dissented from them. In all my life, I never lived in the parish where one person was publicly admonished, or brought to public penitence, or excommunicated, though there were never so many obstinate drunkards, whoremongers, or vilest offenders. Only I have known now and then one for getting a bastard, that went to the bishop's court and paid his fees; and I heard of two or three in all the country, in all my life, that stood in a white sheet an hour in the church; but the ancient discipline of the church was unknown. And, indeed, it was made by them impossible, when one man that lived at a distance from them, and knew not one of many hundreds of the flock, did take upon him the sole jurisdiction, and executed it not by himself, but by a lay chancellor, excluding the pastors of the several congregations, who were but to join with the churchwardens and the apparitors in presenting men, and bringing them into their courts; and an impossible task must needs be unperformed. And so the controversy, as to the letter and outside, was, *Who shall be the governors of all the particular churches?* But to the sense and inside of it, it was, *Whether there should be any effectual church government, or not?* Whereupon, those that pleaded for discipline, were called by the new name of the disciplinarians; as if it had been a kind of heresy to desire discipline in the church."—*Reformed Pastor*, *Works*, vol. xiv. p. 145.

because it was their own doing, and they knew they might come in when they would, they were quiet in their separation; for we took them for the Separatists. Those that scrupled our gesture at the sacrament, I openly told that they should have it in their own. Yet did I baptise all their children, but made them first, as I would have done by strangers, give me privately, or publicly if they had rather, an account of their faith; and if any father was a scandalous sinner, I made him confess his sin openly, with seeming penitence, before I would baptise his child. If he refused it, I forbore till the mother came to present it; for I rarely, if ever, found both father and mother so destitute of knowledge and faith, as in a church sense to be incapable hereof.[g]

"Another advantage which I found to my success, was, by ordering my doctrine to them in a suitableness to the main end, and yet so as might suit their dispositions and diseases. The things which I daily opened to them, and with greatest importunity laboured to imprint upon their minds, were the great

[g] Baxter appears to have maintained a most vigilant and effective discipline in his congregation. Of his fidelity to individuals, many proofs remain in the pointed letters which he wrote to them. The following is a specimen, from the Baxter MSS. in Redcross Street Library, which I select chiefly on account of its brevity. It shows how much of Congregationalism was in Baxter's system of church polity.

"George Nichols,

"Because you shall have no pretence to say that we deal hardly with you, I shall not meddle with that which is commonly called excommunication against you. But because you have disclaimed your membership, and denied to express repentance of it, even in private, which you should have done in public, I shall this day acquaint the church of your sin and separation, (in which you have broken your covenant to God and us,) and that you are no more a member of this church or of my pastoral charge. I shall do no more, but shall leave the rest to God, who will do more, only I shall desire the church to pray for your repentance and forgiveness; and, therefore, desire you this day to be there and join with us in those prayers. And then, except you openly lament your sin, you shall be troubled with my admonitions no more. From this time forward I have done with you, till either God correct you, or I and my warnings and labours be brought in as a witness against you to your confusion.

"Your compassionate Friend,

"RICHARD BAXTER.

"Jan. 28, 1658."

The answer to this, is on the same sheet in another hand.

"Sir,

"Except Pearshall, your Constable, will come to church, and there acknowledge that he has done me wrong in saying I was drunk, I shall not appear there. So I rest,

"Your Servant,

"GEORGE NICHOLS."

fundamental principles of Christianity contained in their baptismal covenant, even a right knowledge and belief of, and subjection and love to, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; love to all men, and concord with the church and one another. I did so daily inculcate the knowledge of God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, love and obedience to God, unity with the church catholic, and love to men and the hope of life eternal, that these were the matter of their daily cogitations and discourses, and, indeed, their religion.

"Yet, I did usually put in something in my sermon, which was above their own discovery, and which they had not known before; and this I did that they might be kept humble, and still perceive their ignorance, and be willing to keep in a learning state. For when preachers tell their people of no more than they know, and do not show that they excel them in knowledge, and scarcely overtop them in abilities, the people will be tempted to turn preachers themselves, and think that they have learned all that the ministers can teach them, and are as wise as they. They will be apt to contemn their teachers, and wrangle with all their doctrines, and set their wits against them, and hear them as censurers, and not as disciples, to their own undoing, and to the disturbance of the church; and thus they will easily draw disciples after them. The bare authority of the clergy will not serve the turn, without overtopping ministerial abilities. I did this, also, to increase their knowledge, and to make religion pleasant to them, by a daily addition to their former light, and to draw them on with desire and delight. But these things which they did not know before, were not unprofitable controversies which tended not to edification, or novelties in doctrine contrary to the universal church; but either such points as tended to illustrate the great doctrines before mentioned, or usually about the right methodizing of them. The opening of the true and profitable method of the creed, or doctrine of faith; the Lord's Prayer, or matter of our desires; and the ten commandments, or the law of practice.

"Another thing that helped me, was, my not meddling with tithes or worldly business, whereby I had my whole time, except what sickness deprived me of, for my duty, and my mind more free from entanglements than else it would have been; and, also, I escaped the offending of the people, and contending by any law-suits with them. Three or four of my neighbours managed all those kind of businesses, of whom I never took ac-

count; and if any one refused to pay his tithes, if he was poor, I ordered them to forgive it him. After that, I was constrained to let the tithes be gathered, as by my title, to save the gatherers from lawsuits. But if the parties were able, I ordered them to seek it by the magistrate, with the damage, and give both my part and the damages to the poor; for I resolved to have none of it myself that was recovered by law, and yet I could not tolerate the sacrilege and fraud of covetous men. When they knew that this was the rule I went by, none of them that were able would do the poor so great a kindness as to deny the payment of their tithes. In my own family, I had the help of my father and stepmother, and the benefit of a godly, understanding, faithful servant, an ancient woman, near sixty years' old, who eased me of all care, and laid out all my money for housekeeping; so that I never had one hour's trouble about it, nor ever took one day's account of her for fourteen years together, as being certain of her fidelity, providence, and skill.

"Finally, it much furthered my success, that I staid still in this one place, near two years before the wars, and above fourteen years after; for he that removeth oft from place to place, may sow good seed in many places, but is not likely to see much fruit in any, unless some other skilful hand shall follow him to water it. It was a great advantage to me to have almost all the religious people of the place, of my own instructing and informing; and that they were not formed into erroneous and factious principles before; and that I staid to see them grow up to some confirmedness and maturity.

"Our successes were enlarged beyond our own congregations, by the lectures kept up round about. To divers of them I went as oft as I was able; and the neighbouring ministers, oftener than I; especially Mr. Oasland, of Bewdley, who, having a strong body, a zealous spirit, and an earnest utterance, went up and down preaching from place to place, with great acceptance and success. But this business, also, we contrived to be universally and orderly managed. For, beside the fixed lectures set up on week days, in several places, we studied how to have them extend to every place in the county that had need. For when the parliament purged the ministry, they cast out the grosser sort of insufficient and scandalous ones, such as gross drunkards and the like; and also some few civil men that had assisted in the wars against the parliament, or set up bowing to altars, or such innovations; but they had left in nearly one half the minis-

ters, that were not good enough to do much service, or bad enough to be cast out as utterly intolerable. There were many poor, weak preachers who had no great skill in divinity, or zeal for godliness; but preached weakly that which is true, and lived in no gross, notorious sin. These men were not cast out, but yet their people greatly needed help; for their dark, sleepy preaching did but little good. We, therefore, resolved that some of the abler ministers should often voluntarily help them; but all the care was how to do it without offending them.

"It fell out seasonably that the Londoners of that county, at their yearly feast, collected about thirty pounds, and sent it me by that worthy man, Mr. Thomas Stanley, of Bread-street, to set up a lecture for that year. We, therefore, covered all our designs under the name of the Londoners' Lecture, which took off the offence. We chose four worthy men, Mr. Andrew Tristram, Mr. Henry Oasland, Mr. Thomas Baldwin, and Mr. Joseph Treble, who undertook to go, each man his day, once a month, which was every Lord's day among the four, and to preach at those places which had most need twice on the Lord's day. To avoid all ill consequences and offence, they were sometimes to go to abler men's congregations; and wherever they came, to say something always to draw the people to the honour and special regard of their own pastors, that, how weak soever they were, they might see that we came not to draw away the people's hearts from them, but to strengthen their hands, and help them in their work.

"This lecture did a great deal of good; and though the Londoners gave their money but that one year, when it was once set on foot, we continued it voluntarily, till the ministers were turned out and all these works went down together.

"So much of the way and helps of those successes, which I mention, because many have inquired after them, as willing, with their own flocks, to take that course which other men have by experience found to be effectual."[h]

I have thus given an abridged but faithful statement of Baxter's labours and success, during the most important period of his public ministry, and of the principal means which promoted that success. In few instances have the ministers of Christ been honoured to be so extensively useful to the souls of their hearers; and where eminent success has occurred we have not

[h] Life, part i., pp. 83—96.

always been sufficiently informed of the means by which it has been promoted. The secret of his success, Baxter has disclosed to us in the most faithful and interesting manner. While we admire the grace of God which so abundantly rested upon his labours, we cannot but notice at the same time, the extraordinary suitableness and adaptation, both of the instrument himself, and of the means which he employed in the work he was honoured to accomplish. To a few points in the preceding statement, I hope I shall be forgiven for turning the attention of the Christian minister.

Abstracting all the temporary and local circumstances to which Baxter adverts as favourable to his success, the simplicity and intense ardour of his preaching demand our notice. It was admirably adapted to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the careless, and to build up the faithful. He sought out acceptable words, but he had neither time nor taste for making what are called fine sermons; he studied point, not brilliancy. His object was not to dazzle, but to convince; not to excite admiration of himself, but to procure the reception of his message. He never aimed at drawing attention to the preacher, but always at fixing it at home, or guiding it to Christ. He never "courted a grin," when he might have "wooed a soul;" or played with the fancy, when he should have been dissecting the heart. His subjects were always the most important which can engage the attention of man,—the creed, the commandments, and the Lord's prayer; or, according to his own simple definition of them—the things to be believed, the things to be done, and the things to be desired. These were the leading, indeed, the only topics of his ministry. Into these he entered with all the intense ardour of his acute and deeply impressible mind. He never spoke like a man who was indifferent whether his audience felt what he said, or considered him in earnest on the subject. His eye, his action, his every word, were expressive of deep and impassioned earnestness, that his hearers might be saved. His was eloquence of the highest order; not the eloquence of nicely-selected words—or the felicitous combination of terms and phrases—or the music of exquisitely-balanced periods, (though these properties are frequently to be found in Baxter's discourses): but the eloquence of the most important truths, vividly apprehended, and energetically delivered. It was the eloquence of a soul burning with ardent devotion to God, and inspired with the deepest compassion for men; on whom the powers of the worlds

of darkness, and of light, exercised their mighty influence; and spoke through his utterances, all that was tremendous in warning, and all that was delightful in invitation and love. He was condescending to the ignorant, faithful to the self-righteous and careless, tender to the timid and afflicted; in a word, as a preacher, he became all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. It was impossible that such a man should labour in vain.

Another thing which strikes us in the ministerial conduct of Baxter, was his careful avoidance of every thing which might prejudice his hearers against him, and his diligent cultivation of whatever was likely to gain their favour, or secure their impartial attention. No one could be less of a man-pleaser than he was; for, apart from promoting the object of his ministry, he was regardless of human frown or favour. But he considered nothing unimportant, which either stood in the way of his success, or was likely to promote it. His conduct, in regard to his tithes; his remaining unmarried; his practising physic; his liberality to the poor; his distribution of books, &c., were all intended to be subservient to his great work. The gaining of souls to Christ was the only object for which he lived. Hence, amidst the seeming variety of his pursuits and engagements, there was a perfect harmony of design. His ruling and controlling principle, was the love of his Master, producing the desire of a full and faithful discharge of his duty as his approved minister. This was the centre around which every thing moved, and by which every thing in his circumstances and character was attracted or repelled. This gave unity to all his plans, and constituted the moral force of all his actions. It gave enlightened energy to his zeal, exquisite tenderness to his persuasions, warmth and fervency to his admonitions. It poured over all his public and private ministrations that holy unction, which diffused its fragrance, spreading its bland and refreshing influences all around.

A third point worthy of observation in his ministry, is, that it was not limited to the pulpit, or considered as discharged in the parlour. The blow which he aimed at the mass in public, was followed by successive strokes addressed to the individuals in private. The congregation was not permitted to forget, during the week, what they had been taught on the sabbath. The man who would have been lost in the crowd, or who might have sheltered himself under the exceptions which belong to a general

address, was singled out, convicted, and shut up to the faith, or left to bear the stings of an instructed and alarmed conscience. The young were interested, and led on; the wavering were admonished, and established; the strong were taught to minister to the weak; and the prayers of many a holy band, at once, strengthened the hands of their minister, and "girded each other for the race divine." This was truly making full proof of his ministry, and promoting in his congregation the grand objects and aims of the fellowship of Christianity.

When we thus connect the public talents, and private character of Baxter; the energy and point of his pulpit addresses with the assiduousness, the perseverance, and the variety, of his other labours; his devotion to God, his disinterested love to men; what he was as a *pastor*, with all that he was as a *preacher;* we cease to wonder at the effects which he produced. No place could long resist such a train and style of aggression. All people must feel the force of such a moral warfare as that which he waged. There are few individuals, who could escape without being wounded, or conquered, by such an assailant. In comparison with him, how few are there even among the faithful ministers of Christ, who can think of themselves, or their labours with satisfaction! Yet, was there nothing in Baxter, but what the grace and power of God can do for others. There was something in his exertions, almost super-human; yet he seemed to accomplish all with a considerable degree of ease and comfort to himself. He never seems to have been bustled, but he was always busy; and thus he found time for all he had to do, while he employed that time in the most profitable manner. We have only to find an increase of such ministers in the church of Christ, and who will employ the same kind of means, in order to the accomplishment, in any place, of effects that will not shrink from a comparison with Kidderminster itself in all its glory.

The effects of Baxter's labours, in Kidderminster, were lasting, as well as extensive. He frequently refers to his beloved flock, long after he had left them, in terms of the warmest affection. Many of them continued to adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, till they finished their mortal course; and, doubtless, now constitute their pastor's crown of rejoicing in the presence of their Redeemer. Nor did the effects of his exertions expire with that generation. Mr. Fawcett, who abridged the 'Saint's Rest,' in 1759, says, "that the religious spirit thus

happily introduced by Baxter, is yet to be traced, in the town, and neighbourhood in some degree."[i] He represents the professors of that place, as "possessing an unusual degree of candour, and friendship, for each other." Thus evincing, "that Kidderminster had not totally lost the amiable spirit it had imbibed more than a century before."[j]

When the Gospel was removed from the Church, it was carried to the Meeting; though at what time a separate congregation was regularly established, cannot now be satisfactorily ascertained. Baxter was not friendly to an entire separation from the church, and carried his opposition to it so far, as seriously to offend some of his old congregation, who could not endure the teaching of his successors. A separation accordingly took place, which laid the foundation of a large dissenting congregation.

On Baxter's removal from Kidderminster, he recommended to the people to be guided by Mr. Serjeant, then minister of Stone, who had formerly assisted him; and Mr. Thomas Baldwin, who had acted as schoolmaster in Kidderminster, and was both a good scholar and possessed of respectable ministerial qualifications. Mr. Baldwin was minister of the parish of Chaddesly till the Bartholomew ejectment: he then removed to Kidderminster, and settled with the Nonconformists who left the church. His ministry was repeatedly interrupted; but he died in Kidderminster, in 1693. After his death, Mr. White, the vicar of the parish, preached and published his funeral sermon; in which he speaks in the highest terms of his piety, his talents, and his moderation. He was, in all respects, worthy to be the successor of Baxter. The sermon is honourable alike to the preacher and to the deceased.[k]

He was succeeded by Mr. Francis Spilsbury, son of the Rev. John Spilsbury, the ejected minister of Bromsgrove, and nephew to Dr. Hall, Bishop of Bristol. He was ordained in the year 1693, and after a useful ministry of thirty-four years, died in 1727. His uncle, the Bishop, who was also Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Margaret Professor, used to visit him, and reside in his family, where he was attended by his clergy, while his nephew preached in the meeting. He was succeeded by the Rev. Matthew Bradshaw, who married his daughter. He was a man of similar sentiments and spirit, and laboured in the congregation till the year 1745, when he was suc-

[i] Preface. [j] Dedication.

[k] Life, part iii. p. 92; Noncon. Mem. iii. pp. 389, 390; White's Sermon.

ceeded by Benjamin Fawcett, a favourite pupil of Dr. Doddridge, and who abridged several of Baxter's works. His death took place in 1780.[1] After that event a division occurred, which led to the erection of another meeting, of which the Rev. Robert Gentleman, who edited Orton's Exposition of the Old Testament, became the first minister.

In the original congregation, Mr. Barrett became the successor of Fawcett; he was a man of respectable talents. He was followed by Mr. Steill, now of Wigan, in Lancashire; on whose removal, Mr. Thomas Helmore, educated at Gosport, was ordained to the pastoral office in 1810. He was followed by Mr. Joseph John Freeman, now a missionary in Madagascar; whose place has been supplied by Dr. James Ross, formerly a missionary at Karass, in Russian Tartary.[m]

[1] Many particulars respecting these parties may be seen in Mr. Hanbury's "Enlarged Diary, &c., of Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster." See also, "Orton's Letters to Dissenting Ministers;" in the second volume of which there is a short memoir of Mr. Fawcett.

[m] The pulpit in which Baxter preached is still preserved. About forty years ago it was sold, together with the pewing of the parish church, for a trifling sum. A gentleman, anxious to preserve it from destruction, bought it from the first purchaser for five pounds, and placed it in the vestry of the new meeting. It is rather a handsome production of its kind. It is of an octagon form. The pannels have long carved flowers on them, which are painted different colours, and some of the gilding still remains. There is a large sounding-board surmounted by a crown upon a cushion. Around the top is inscribed, "And call upon his name, declare his works among the people." (Psalm cv.) It was not built for Baxter, but appears to have been the gift of Alice Dawkx, in the year 1621.

CHAPTER VI.

1648—1660.

The Commonwealth—Cromwell's treatment of his Parliaments—The Triers—Committee of Fundamentals—Principles on which Baxter acted towards Cromwell—Preaches before him—Interviews with him—Admission of the Benefits of Cromwell's Government—Character of Cromwell—Remarks on that character—Richard's Succession and Retirement—The Restoration—Baxter goes to London—Preaches before Parliament—Preaches before the Lord Mayor—The King's Arrival in London—Reception by the London Ministers—Notices of various labours of Baxter during his second residence in Kidderminster—Numerous Works written during this period—Extensive Correspondence—Concluding Observations.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, given a full view of the manner in which Baxter acted in his ministerial capacity, during the period of his second residence in Kidderminster, comprehending fourteen years of the most active and interesting period of his life, we shall now collect some of his views respecting the political events and characters of the Commonwealth, and notice certain parts of his conduct in relation to the parties in power.

To give a full detail of the rapidly-shifting scenes which then passed along the stage, or of the principles and conduct of all the actors, is impracticable; but a view of the times of Baxter would be imperfect, without some notice of them; I can only make a selection, and that selection shall be chiefly in Baxter's own words.

His former connexion with the army of the Commonwealth, had furnished him with opportunities of knowing the characters of not a few of the leading men, in many respects favourable to his forming a correct judgment of their characters, and of the principles by which they were actuated; while his conscientious fidelity led him to speak, both to them and of them, so plainly as to leave no ambiguity whatever as to the estimate which he formed.

Every thing relative to Oliver Cromwell still possesses consi-

derable interest; and as Baxter has said a good deal respecting him, it would be unjustifiable in these memoirs, to omit the substance of the information which he has furnished. The following account quite harmonises with other documents which record the transactions of the times. Having given a narrative of the final defeat of the royal army, of the flight of Charles II. to France, and of the policy pursued toward Scotland, he thus describes the measures of the crafty Protector, in the treatment of his parliaments.

"Cromwell having thus far seemed to be a servant to the parliament, and to work for his masters, the Rump, or Commonwealth, did next begin to show whom he served, and take that impediment also out of the way. To this end, he first did by them as he did by the Presbyterians, make them odious by hard speeches against them throughout his army; as if they intended to perpetuate themselves, and would not be accountable for the money of the Commonwealth, &c. He also treated privately with many of them, to appoint a time when they would dissolve themselves, so that another free parliament might be chosen. But they perceived the danger, and were rather for filling up their number by new elections, which he was utterly against.

"His greatest advantage to strengthen himself against them by the sectaries, was their owning the public ministry and its maintenance; for though Vane and his party set themselves to make the ministers odious, and to take them down by reproachful titles, still the greater part of the House did carry it for a sober ministry and competent maintenance. When the Quakers and others openly reproached the ministry, and the soldiers favoured them, I drew up a petition for the ministry, got many thousand hands to it in Worcestershire, and Mr. Thomas Foley and Colonel John Bridges presented it. The House gave it a kind and promising answer, which increased the sectaries' displeasure against the House. When a certain Quaker wrote a reviling censure of this petition, I wrote a defence of it, and caused one of them to be given to each parliament-man at the door; but within one day after this, they were dissolved.[1] For Cromwell, impatient of any more delay, suddenly took Harrison and some soldiers with him, as if God had impelled him, and, as in a rapture, went into the House and reproved the members for their faults. Pointing to Vane, he

[1] These were published under the title of 'The Worcestershire Petition,' and the 'Defence of it;' an account of which will be found in another place.

called him a juggler; and to Henry Martin, called him whore-master;[m] and having two such to instance in, took it for granted that they were all unfit to continue in the government of the Commonwealth, and out he turned them. So ended the government of the Rump. No sort of people expressed any great offence that they were cast out, though almost all, save the sectaries and the army, did take him to be a traitor who did it.

"The young Commonwealth being already headless, you might think that nothing was left to stand between Cromwell and the crown. For a governor there must be, and who should be thought fitter? But yet there was another pageant to be played, which had a double end: first, to make the necessity of his government undeniable: and, secondly, to put his own soldiers, at last, out of love with democracy; or, at least, to make those hateful who adhered to it. A parliament must be called, but the ungodly people are not to be trusted with the choice; therefore the soldiers, as more religious, must be the choosers; and two out of a county are chosen by the officers, upon the advice of their sectarian friends in the country. This was called in contempt, *the Little Parliament*.[n]

"Harrison became the head of the sectaries, and Cromwell now began to design the heading of a soberer party, who were for learning and a ministry; but yet to be the equal protector of all. Hereupon, in the little sectarian parliament, it was put to the vote, whether all the parish ministers in England should

[m] A very curious account of this facetious, but, I fear, profligate commoner, is given in 'Aubrey's Miscellanies,' vol. ii. pp. 434—437. A sarcasm of Charles the First, upon Martin, is there alleged to have cost the king the loss of the county of Herks. He was one of the king's judges, and is said to have owed his life to the wit of Lord Faulkland, and his own profligacy. "Gentlemen," said his Lordship, "you talk of making a sacrifice. By the old law, all sacrifices were required to be without spot or blemish; and now you are going to make this old rotten rascal a sacrifice!" The joke took, and saved Henry's life.

[n] One of the best and fullest views which we have of Cromwell's parliaments has been recently furnished in 'Burton's Diary,' edited by Mr. Towill Rutt. It shows us more of the working of the Protector's system than any former publication had done. Certainly, some of the members were not the best qualified of all men to be legislators, if we may judge from many of their opinions and expressions, as they here appear. They meddled with various matters, which they had much better have let alone; though it is clear that even Old Noll, with all his power and sternness, could not make them do what he pleased. Scobell's acts of these parliaments shows, however, that some of their enactments were both wise and salutary.

at once be put down; and it was but accidentally carried in the negative by two voices.[o] It was taken for granted, that the tithes and universities would, at the next opportunity, be voted down; and so Cromwell must be their saviour, or they must perish; when he had purposely cast them into the pit, that they might be beholden to him to pull them out. But his game was so grossly played, that it made him the more loathed by men of understanding and sincerity. So Sir Charles Wolsley, and some others, took their time, and put it to the vote, whether the House, as incapable of serving the Commonwealth, should go and deliver up their power to Cromwell, from whom they had received it; which was carried in the affirmative. So away they went, and solemnly resigned their power to him; and now, who but Cromwell and his army? [p]

"The intelligent sort, by this time, did fully see that Crom-

[o] This statement is incorrect: no such question as the abolition of the ministry having been discussed in that parliament. "On the 15th of July, 1653, the question was proposed whether the *maintenance of ministers by tithes* should be continued after the third day of November next: and the question being put, that that question be now put, it passed in the negative. The noes 68, yeas 43."—*Journals of the House of Commons.* This, I have no doubt, is the affair to which Baxter refers. The reader will easily distinguish between the abolition of tithes, and the abolition of the ministry. The following extract from a report of the committee on tithes, appointed by this parliament, will show what were the real sentiments entertained by them on that subject. I am much deceived if they will not be thought enlightened even at the present time. "Resolved, that it be presented to the Parliament that all such as are or shall be approved for public preachers of the Gospel in the public meeting places, shall have and enjoy the maintenance already settled by law; and such other encouragement as the Parliament hath already appointed, or hereafter shall appoint: and that where any scruple payment of tithes, the three next justices of the peace, or two of them, shall upon complaint call the parties before them; and, by the oaths of lawful witnesses, shall duly apportion the value of the said tithes, to be paid either in money or land by them, to be set out according to the said value, to be held and enjoyed by him that was to have had the said tithes: and in case such apportioned value be not duly paid, or enjoyed according to the order of the said justices, the tithes shall be paid in kind, and shall be recovered in any court of record. Upon hearing and considering what hath been offered to this committee touching propriety in tithes of incumbents, rectors, possessors of donatives, or propriate tithes, it is the opinion of this committee, and resolved to be reported so to the Parliament, the said persons have a legal propriety in tithes."—*Journal, Dec.* 2, 1653. There is no evidence that the parliament ever intended to put down the universities, or to alienate the lands which belonged to them, from the purpose to which they were originally destined.

[p] Cromwell, in his opening speech at the meeting of the ensuing parliament, solemnly declared that he knew nothing of this act of dissolution, till the speaker and the members came and put it into his hands. It is strange if he was ignorant of it, and equally strange, if he had a hand in it, that he should in public declare his ignorance.—*Harris's Life of Cromwell*, p. 334.

well's design was, by causing and permitting destruction to hang over us, to necessitate the nation, whether it would or not, to take him for its governor, that he might be its protector. Being resolved that we should be saved by him or perish, he made more use of the wild-headed sectaries than barely to fight for him. They now served him as much by their heresies, their enmity to learning and the ministry, and their pernicious demands which tended to confusion, as they had done before by their valour in the field. He could now conjure up at pleasure some terrible apparition of agitators, levellers, or such-like, who, as they affrighted the king from Hampton Court, affrighted the people to fly to him for refuge; that the hand that wounded them, might heal them. Now he exclaimed against the giddiness of these unruly men, and earnestly pleaded for order, and government, and must needs become the patron of the ministry; yet, so as to secure all others their liberty."[q] So much for the address and policy of this extraordinary man.

One great object of Cromwell's government was the purification of the ministry. For this purpose, after the Westminster Assembly was dissolved, he appointed a body of Triers, consisting, partly of ministers, partly of laymen, who examined all who were able to come to London; but other cases they referred to a committee of ministers in the counties in which they lived. As strange accounts have been given of this body, and as Baxter himself disapproved of their constitution and proceedings, it may be well to hear his account of them.

"Because this assembly of Triers is most heartily accused, and reproached by some men, I shall speak the truth of them, and, I suppose, my word will be rather taken, because most of them took me for one of their boldest adversaries, as to their opinions, and because I was known to disown their power; insomuch, that I refused to try any under them upon their reference, except very few, whose importunity and necessity moved me, they being such, as for their episcopal judgment, or some such cause, the Triers were likely to have rejected. The truth is, that though their authority was mild, and though some few who were over-busy, and over-rigid Independents among them, were too severe against all that were Arminians, and too particular in inquiring after evidences of sanctification in those whom

[q] Life, part i. pp. 69—71.

they examined, and somewhat too lax in their admission of unlearned and erroneous men, who favoured Antinomianism or Anabaptism; yet to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers; that sort of men, who intended no more in the ministry, than to say a sermon, as readers say their common prayers, and to patch up a few good words together, to talk the people asleep on Sunday, and all the rest of the week go with them to the alehouse, and harden them in their sin: and that sort of ministers, who either preached against a holy life, or preached as men that never were acquainted with it. All those who used the ministry but as a common trade to live by, and were never likely to convert a soul, they usually rejected, and in their stead they admitted persons of any denomination who were able, serious, preachers, and lived a godly life. So that though many of them were somewhat partial to the Independents, Separatists, Fifth-Monarchy men, and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, so great was the benefit above the hurt which they brought to the church, that many thousands of souls blessed God for the faithful ministers whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterward cast them out again."[r]

Whatever objections of a technical nature might be brought against Cromwell's Triers, after this impartial testimony to the general character of their proceedings, no person acquainted with the principles of the Gospel, and with what ought to constitute the character of its ministers, will object to the ejection of openly ignorant and ungodly teachers, and the substitution in their place of those who feared God, and were likely to care for the souls of men. It is evident, the Triers were not mere partisans, as they neither ejected men on account of their sentiments respecting church government, nor supplied their places by persons of one profession. They may have caused occasional hardship and suffering, but it seems very clear from Baxter, that they were guided by sound principles, and prosecuted through good report and through bad report, the best interests of religion.

Reference to the Triers leads me to notice Baxter's connexion with the committee appointed to digest and report respecting the fundamentals of religion, as the basis of a system of

[r] Life, part i. p. 72.

toleration, or religious liberty, to be adopted by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. He has given a long and curious account of the proceedings of this committee, and of his own conduct in it, the substance of which I have given in another place.[s] Baxter was appointed one of them by Lord Broghill, at the suggestion of Archbishop Usher. He came late, and after certain points had been determined, which they refused to alter. His interference, however, probably checked their proceedings, and contributed to defeat the object which some of them had in view. Not that he understood religious liberty better than the others, but he excelled them all in finding out objections to whatever was proposed; though his own scheme would not have greatly improved what was determined by the majority. The most important result of this meeting to Baxter, was its being the means of introducing him to Archbishop Usher, with whom he appears to have had much friendly intercourse, and with whose views of church government he nearly agreed. Usher was one of the most amiable of men, and the most moderate of bishops; whose enlightened sentiments and suggestions, had they been attended to, would have preserved the country from many of the evils which befell it.

The peculiar circumstances of the country, and the political management of Cromwell, naturally induced a great diversity of opinion among religious people, as to the nature and extent of the submission which they were called to render to the existing government. Some, regarding it as a usurpation, and influenced considerably by the doctrine of divine right, opposed and reviled it. Others regarded what appeared to be the arrangements of Providence, as the will of God that they should submit to, asking no questions for conscience' sake. A third and numerous body, in theory disputed the claims of Cromwell and his party, but in practice quietly submitted to the laws which they enacted. Baxter in this, as in many other matters, pursued a course of his own.

"I did seasonably and moderately, by preaching and printing, condemn the usurpation, and the deceit which was the means to bring it to pass. I did in open conference declare Cromwell and his adherents to be guilty of treason and rebellion, aggravated by perfidiousness and hypocrisy.[t] But yet I did not think

[s] Life, part ii. pp. 197—206. Owen's Memoirs, pp. 113—116.

[t] Baxter changed his mind respecting his conduct to Cromwell at a subsequent period. In his 'Penitent Confessions,' written in 1691, he says: "I

it my duty to rave against him in the pulpit, or to do this so unseasonably and imprudently as might irritate him to mischief. And the rather because, as he kept up his approbation of a godly life in general, and of all that was good, except that which the interest of his sinful cause engaged him to be against; so I perceived that it was his design to do good in the main, and to promote the Gospel and the interests of godliness, more than any had done before him; except in those particulars which were against his own interest. The principal means that henceforward he trusted to for his establishment, was doing good, that the people might love him, or at least be willing to have his government for that good, who were against it as it was usurpation.[u] I made no question but that when the rightful governor should be restored, the people who had adhered to him, being so extremely irritated, would cast out multitudes of the ministers, and undo the good which the usurper had done, because he did it, and would bring abundance of calamity upon the land. Some men thought it a very hard question, whether they should rather wish the continuance of a usurper who did good, or the restitution of a rightful governor whose followers would do hurt. For my part I thought my duty was clear, to disown the usurper's sin what good soever he would do; and to perform all my engagements to a rightful governor, leaving the issue of all to God; but yet to commend the good which a

am in great doubt how far I did well or ill in my opposition to Cromwell and his army at last. I am satisfied that it was my duty to disown, and as I said, to oppose their rebellion and other sins. But there were many honest, pious men among them. And when God chooseth the executioner of justice as he pleaseth, I am oft in doubt whether I should not have been more passive and silent than I was; though not as Jeremiah to Nebuchadnezzar, to persuade men to submit, yet to have forborne some sharp public preaching and writing against them,—when they set themselves too late to promote piety to ingratiate their usurpation. To disturb possessors needeth a clear call, when for what end soever they do that good, which men of better title will destroy." pp. 24, 25. From a letter of his to one of the judges among his MSS, it appears he brought himself into difficulty by preaching against Cromwell. How he got out of it, or what was the extent of his danger, does not clearly appear. Cromwell's usual moderation probably induced him to drop proceedings.

[u] I think it by no means evident that Cromwell's sole motives in repressing evil and doing good, were the establishment and consolidation of his own power; or that he stuck at nothing, when it was necessary to accomplish his own interest. That he was ambitious in the latter part of his life, is certain; and that he had also learnt the royal art of dissimulation, is undoubted: but that there was a great preponderance of good in his character, and of just and liberal views of policy, can no longer be matter of doubt to those who have studied his history.

usurper doth, and to do every lawful thing which might provoke him to do more; and to approve of no evil which is done by any, whether a usurper or a lawful governor." [x]

With Baxter, to hold certain sentiments, and to act upon them in the face of every danger to which they might expose him, were the same thing. The following anecdote of his personal intercourse with Cromwell, illustrates the preceding statement and the character of Cromwell, and shows how faithfully he acted according to his sentiments and convictions.

"At this time Lord Broghill and the Earl of Warwick [y] brought me to preach before Cromwell, the protector; which was the only time that ever I preached to him, save once long before, when he was an inferior man, amongst other auditors. I knew not which way to provoke him better to his duty than by preaching on 1 Cor. i. 10, against the divisions and distractions of the church, and showing how mischievous a thing it was for politicians to maintain such divisions for their own ends, that they might fish in troubled waters, and keep the church by its divisions in a state of weakness lest it should be able to offend them; and showing the necessity and means of union. My

[x] Life, part i. p. 71.

[y] Robert Rich, the second Earl of Warwick, was at an early period of his life the patron and friend of the persecuted Puritans. He took an active part in the prosecution of Strafford and Laud; and was made by the Long Parliament, in opposition to the will of Charles, admiral of the fleet, and afterwards lord high admiral of England. He enjoyed a large portion of the confidence of Cromwell, and was one of the few old nobility who sat in his upper house. Clarendon praises his "pleasant and companionable wit and conversation;" and speaks of "his great authority and cred it with the Puritans," which he represents as acquired "by making his house the rendezvous of all the silenced ministers, and spending a good part of his estate upon them, and by being present at their devotions, and making himself merry with them and at them, which they dispensed with." He intimates that "thus he became the head of that party, and got the style of a godly man;" though "he was of universal jollity, and used great license in his words and actions."—*Hist.* vol. ii. p. 210. This I believe to be one of those cases in which Clarendon's politics completely corrupted his historical integrity. Dr. Owen's opinion of Warwick's piety, may be seen in his dedication to him of his 'Salus Electorum,' Owen's Works, v. p. 207. Godwin's view of his character is highly advantageous to his talents and respectability as a man, and conveys no impression of his immorality, which is strongly implied in Clarendon's account, Commonwealth, i. p. 192. It is not at all likely that a profligate man should have enjoyed the full confidence of the Puritans. His grandson married the Protector's favourite daughter, Lady Frances. He died before Cromwell, in 1658, and his funeral sermon was preached by Calamy, who makes honourable mention of his religious dispositions and habits.

plainness I heard was displeasing to him and his courtiers; but they put it up.

"A little while after, Cromwell sent to speak with me, and when I came, in the presence of only three of his chief men,[x] he began a long and tedious speech to me of God's providence in the change of the government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done at home and abroad, in the peace with Spain and Holland, &c. When he had wearied us all with speaking thus slowly about an hour, I told him it was too great condescension to acquaint me so fully with all these matters, which were above me; but I told him that we took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing, and not an evil to the land; and humbly craved his patience that I might ask him how England had ever forfeited that blessing, and unto whom that forfeiture was made? I was fain to speak of the form of government only, for it had lately been made treason, by law, to speak for the person of the king.

"Upon that question, he was awakened into some passion, and then told me it was no forfeiture, but God had changed it as pleased him; and then he let fly at the parliament, which thwarted him; and especially by name at four or five of those members who were my chief acquaintances, whom I presumed to defend against his passion: and thus four or five hours were spent.

"A few days after he sent for me again, to hear my judgment about liberty of conscience, which he pretended to be most zealous for, before almost all his privy council; where, after another slow tedious speech of his, I told him a little of my judgment. And when two of his company had spun out a great deal more of the time in such-like tedious, but more ignorant speeches, some four or five hours being spent, I told him, that if he would be at the labour to read it, I could tell him more of my mind in writing in two sheets, than in that way of speaking in many days; and that I had a paper on the subject by me, written for a friend, which, if he would peruse, and allow for the change of the person, he would know my sense. He received the paper afterwards, but I scarcely believe that he ever read it; for I saw that what he learned must be from himself; being more

[x] Lord Broghill, Lambert, and Thurlow, were the individuals present on this occasion. Lambert fell asleep during Cromwell's speech.—*Baxter's Penitent Confessions*, p. 25.

disposed to speak many hours, than to hear one; and little heeding what another said, when he had spoken himself."[a]

This characteristic account of Cromwell's conversation and speeches, very much corresponds with the accounts given by other contemporaries, both friends and enemies. It was natural for such a man to attach quite as much importance to his own opinions as to those of his friends; and, comparing him with the generality of the persons by whom he was surrounded, there were certainly very few more capable of forming an enlightened opinion than himself. It is probable that he sent for Baxter on the present occasion, to sound him about his own views and those of the party with which he acted. It is very certain he understood the doctrine of religious liberty much better than Baxter did; and acted upon it both towards Episcopalians and Presbyterians in a different way from what those bodies did when in possession of power.

Whatever personal displeasure Cromwell might have felt at the conduct and plain dealing of Baxter, on this and other occasions, it is much to his honour that he had greatness of mind enough not to resent it. Had Baxter used the same freedom with the royal successors of Cromwell which he used with him, he would most probably have lost his head. He narrowly enough escaped as it was, though most conscientious in respecting their authority, and rendering obedience to their laws. Baxter had the candour to acknowledge how much the country was obliged to Oliver.

"When Cromwell was made lord protector, he had the policy not to detect and exasperate the ministers and others who consented not to his government. Having seen what a stir the engagement had before made, he let men live quietly without putting any oaths of fidelity upon them, except members of his parliaments; these he would not allow to enter the House till they had sworn fidelity to him. The sectarian party, in his army and elsewhere, he chiefly trusted to and pleased, till, by the people's submission and quietness, he thought himself well settled; and then he began to undermine them, and, by degrees, to work them out. Though he had so often spoken for the Anabaptists before, he now found them so heady, and so much against any settled government, and so set upon the promoting of their way and party, that he not only began to blame their

[a] Life, part i. p. 205.

unruliness, but also to design to settle himself in the people's favour by suppressing them. In Ireland they were grown so high, that the soldiers were many of them re-baptised as the way to preferment; and those who opposed them, they crushed with much uncharitable fierceness. To suppress these, he sent thither his son Henry Cromwell, who so discountenanced the Anabaptists, as yet to deal civilly with them; repressing their insolencies, but not abusing them; promoting the work of the Gospel, and setting up good and sober ministers; and dealing civilly with the Royalists, and obliging all, so that he was generally beloved and well spoken of: and Major-General Ludlow, who headed the Anabaptists in Ireland,[b] was fain to draw in his head." [c]

This statement reflects great honour on the sagacity and dextrous management of Cromwell. He was surrounded by a very strange sort of people, most of whom thought themselves well qualified to govern the country, and, indeed, to rule the world. He knew that great mischief would result from pursuing violent measures against such persons; and, therefore, like a skilful tactician, he gradually deprived them of power, or placed them in such circumstances that they could do little harm to themselves or to others. The greatest injury that could have been done to the country, would have been to place his own power in the hands of any of the dominant factions. Confusion worse confounded must have resulted from it. This appeared as soon as the Protector was removed. Yet, the discrimination and wise policy of Cromwell in presiding over the turbulent elements of the Commonwealth, are thought by many to deserve no better names than cant, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

To narrate the various transactions of a civil and religious nature which belong to the administration of Cromwell, is no part of the design of this work. Enough has been said to afford an idea of the state of things, and of the part which

[b] Ludlow was not a Baptist, so far as I can ascertain, though the form of expression employed by Baxter might lead us to suppose it. He was a high-minded republican soldier. A man of Roman rather than Christian virtue; stern, uncompromising, and courageous; who hated Cromwell as heartily as Charles; and would as readily have sat in judgment on the one as a traitor, as he passed sentence on the other as a tyrant. He died, after an exile of thirty years, in Switzerland, to which he retired at the Restoration. His Memoirs of himself possess very considerable interest; but their accuracy cannot always be depended on, as they were written long after many of the events which they describe.

[c] Life, part i. p. 74.

Baxter acted under it. The following character of Cromwell is well drawn, though it may not be correct in every particular.

"I come now to the end of Cromwell's reign, who died of a fever before he was aware. He escaped the attempts of many, who thought to have dispatched him sooner, but could not escape the stroke of God when his appointed time was come.

"Never man was highlier extolled, and never man was baselier reported of, and reviled, than this man. No mere man was better and worse spoken of than he, according as men's interests led their judgments. The soldiers and sectaries most highly magnified him, till he began to seek the crown and the establishment of his family; and then there were so many who would be half-kings themselves, that a king did seem intolerable to them. The Royalists abhorred him as a most perfidious hypocrite; and the Presbyterians thought him little better, in his management of public matters.

"If, after so many others, I may speak my opinion of him, I think that having been a prodigal in his youth, and afterwards changed to a zealous religionist, he meant honestly in the main, and was pious and conscientious in the chief course of his life, till prosperity and success corrupted him.[d] At his first entrance into the wars, being but a captain of horse, he took special care to get religious men into his troop. These were of greater understanding than common soldiers, and therefore were more apprehensive of the importance and consequence of the war; and, making not money, but that which they took for the public felicity, to be their end, they were the more engaged to be valiant; for he that maketh money his end, doth esteem his life above his pay, and therefore is likely enough to save it by flight when danger comes, if possibly he can. But he that maketh the felicity of church and state his end, esteemeth it above his life, and therefore will the sooner lay down his life for it. Men of parts and understanding know how to manage their business. They know that flying is the surest way to death, and that standing to it is the likeliest way to escape; there being many that usually fall in flight, for one that falls in valiant fighting.

"These things, it is probable, Cromwell understood; and that

[d] There is no evidence that Cromwell was a profligate man in early life; and to the last he maintained the greatest regard for justice, morality, and the public interests of religion.

none could be engaged, such valiant men as the religious. Yet, I conjecture, that, at his first choosing such men into his troop, it was the very esteem and love of religious men that principally moved him; and the avoiding of those disorders, mutinies, plunderings, and grievances of the country, which debauched men in armies are commonly guilty of. By this means he indeed sped better than he expected. Aires, Desborough, Berry, Evanson, and the rest of that troop, did prove so valiant, that, as far as I could learn, they never once ran away before an enemy. Hereupon he got a commission to take some care of the associated counties, where he formed this troop into a double regiment of fourteen troops; and all these as full of religious men as he could get. These having more than ordinary wit and resolution, had more than ordinary success; first in Lincolnshire, and afterward in the Earl of Manchester's army at York fight. With their successes, the hearts both of captains and soldiers secretly rose both in pride and expectation: and the familiarity of many honest, erroneous men, as Anabaptists, Antinomians, &c. withal, began quickly to corrupt their judgments. Hereupon Cromwell's general religious zeal gave way to the power of that ambition which increased as his successes increased. Both piety and ambition concurred in countenancing all whom he thought godly, of what sect soever; piety pleaded for them as godly, and charity as men; and ambition secretly told him what use he might make of them. He meant well in all this at the beginning, and thought he did all for the safety of the godly, and the public good; but not without an eye to himself.

"When success had broken down all considerable opposition, he was then in the face of his strongest temptations, which conquered him when he had conquered others. He thought that he had hitherto done well, both as to the *end* and *means;* that God, by the wonderful blessing of his providence, had owned his endeavours, and that it was none but God who had made him great. He thought, that if the war was lawful, the victory was lawful; and that if it were lawful to fight against the king, and conquer him, it was lawful to use him as a conquered enemy, and a foolish thing to trust him when they had so provoked him. He thought that the heart of the king was deep, that he had resolved upon revenge, and that if he were once king, he would easily, at one time or other, accomplish it; that it was a dishonest thing of the parliament to set men to

fight for them against the king, and then to lay their heads upon the block, and be at his mercy; and that if this must be their case, it was better to flatter or please him than to fight against him.[e]

"He saw that the Scots and the Presbyterians in the parliament, did, by the covenant and the oath of allegiance, find themselves bound to the person and family of the king; and that there was no hope of changing their minds in this. Hereupon he joined with that party in the parliament who were for the cutting off the king and trusting him no more; and consequently he joined with them in raising the Independents to make a faction in the Synod at Westminster, and in the city; in strengthening the sectaries in the army, city, and country; and in rendering the Scots and ministers as odious as he could, to disable them from hindering the change of government.[f]

"In the doing of all this, which distrust and ambition persuaded him was well done, he thought it lawful to use his wits, to choose each instrument and suit each means, unto its end; and accordingly he modelled the army, and disbanded all other garrisons, forces, and committees, which were likely to have hindered his design. As he went on, though he had not resolved into what form the new Commonwealth should be moulded, he thought it but reasonable that he should be the chief person who had been chief in their deliverance; for the Lord Fairfax, he knew, had but the name. At last, as he thought it lawful to cut off the king, because he thought he was lawfully conquered, so he thought it lawful to fight against the Scots that would set him up, and to pull down the Presbyterian majority in the parliament, which would else, by restoring the king, undo all which had cost them so much blood and treasure. He accordingly conquered Scotland, and pulled down the parliament: being the easier persuaded that all this was lawful, because he had a secret bias and eye towards his own exaltation. For he and his officers thought, that when the king was gone, a government there must be, and that no man was so fit for it as he himself; yea, they thought that God had called them by suc-

[e] The conduct of Charles fully justified this view of his character; and much more than the ambition of Cromwell contributed to his unhappy fate.

[f] What is here, and afterwards, ascribed entirely to Cromwell's ambition, more properly belongs to the desire of personal preservation, and regard for the safety of the country. The ruling passion of Cromwell was zeal for what he regarded as the cause of God and his country. The circumstances made the man, much more than the man the circumstances.

cesses to govern and take care of the Commonwealth, and of the interest of all his people in the land; and that if they stood by and suffered the parliament to do that which they thought was dangerous, it would be required at their hands, whom they thought God had made the guardians of the land.

"Having thus forced his conscience to justify all his cause, cutting off the king, setting up himself and his adherents, putting down the parliament, and the Scots; he thought that the end being good and necessary, the necessary means could not be bad. He accordingly gave his interest and cause leave to tell him, how far sects should be tolerated and commended, and how far not; how far the ministry should be owned and supported, and how far not; yea, and how far professions, promises, and vows, should be kept or broken; and therefore the covenant he could not away with, nor the ministers, further than they yielded to his ends, or did not openly resist them.

"He seemed exceedingly open-hearted, by a familiar, rustic, affected carriage, especially to his soldiers, in sporting with them; but he thought secrecy a virtue, and dissimulation no vice; and simulation, that is, in plain English, a lie, or perfidiousness, to be a tolerable fault in a case of necessity: being of the same opinion with the Lord Bacon, who was not so precise as learned—'that the best composition and temperature is to have openness in fame and opinion, secrecy in habit, dissimulation in seasonable use, and a power to feign if there be no remedy.' He therefore kept fair with all, saving his open or irreconcilable enemies. He carried it with such dissimulation, that Anabaptists, Independents, and Antinomians, did all think he was one of them; but he never endeavoured to persuade the Presbyterians that he was one of them; but only that he would do them justice, and preserve them, and that he honoured their worth and piety: for he knew that they were not so easily deceived.[g] In a word, he did as our prelates have done, begin low, and rise higher in his resolutions as his condition rose. The promises which he made in his lower condition, he used as the interest of his higher following condition did

[g] Cromwell could not profess to be a Presbyterian, without renouncing the leading principle of his life and government—religious liberty. It was not the difficulty of deceiving them, therefore (for they had often been outwitted by him), which kept him aloof from them, but his opposition to their narrow and exclusive spirit.

require, and kept up as much honesty and godliness in the main as his cause and interest would allow. But there they left him, and his name standeth as a monitory pillar to posterity, to tell them the instability of man in strong temptations if God leave him to himself; what great success and victories can do to lift up a mind that once seemed humble; what pride can do to make men selfish, corrupt the judgment, justify the greatest errors and sins, and set against the clearest truth and duty; what bloodshed and enormities of life, an erring, deluded judgment may execute. An erroneous sectary, or a proud self-seeker, is oftener God's instrument than an humble, lamb-like, innocent saint."[h]

In this lengthened description of Cromwell, and of the principles which chiefly directed his various movements, it is impossible not to recognise the broad features of the Protector's character. They were too strongly marked to be mistaken by such a man as Baxter, however cautiously Cromwell endeavoured to conceal them. The process, too, which Baxter describes as that by which Oliver finally arrived, not only at the pinnacle of earthly power and glory, but by which he justified to his own mind the measures that conducted him to it, is very probably that which actually took place. Yet, I cannot help thinking that Baxter ascribes too much to Cromwell's selfishness and love of personal aggrandisement; and that he uses too strong language about the violence done to his conscience, to reconcile him to the means which he employed. Many things which he did, it is impossible to justify; but even these, though they cannot be defended, admit of some apology, when his circumstances are considered; and when due allowance is made for human infirmity, and for the influence of those mistaken principles, by which it is evident both he and many of the men of his party were influenced. Baxter seems not to do sufficient justice to the real influence of religion on the character of Cromwell; without which, it is not possible to account for many parts of his conduct. His opposition to Presbyterianism, his friendship for the sectaries, and his antimonarchical principles and actions, were unpardonable offences in the estimation of Baxter. Scarcely any degree of personal excellence or public virtue could compensate, in his opinion, for these enormous evils. It should be remembered, however, that if Crom-

[h] Life, part i. pp. 98—100.

well had great faults, he had also splendid virtues; which, in any other character than a usurper's, would have been emblazoned by friends, and eulogised by enemies.[1]

Whatever may be said or thought of the personal religion of Cromwell, the influence of his measures and government on the state of religion in the country, was highly favourable. I have quoted the strong language of Baxter, respecting the sects and the divisions of the period, and the pointed censures which he pronounces on many of the leading men. It is right I should quote what he says about the improved state of religion during the Commonwealth. What a contrast does the following picture present, to the dismal representation of the condition of religion during the early days of Baxter, which have been given in the first part of this work!

"I do not believe that ever England had so able and faithful a ministry since it was a nation, as it hath at this day; and I fear that few nations on earth, if any, have the like. Sure I am the change is so great within these twelve years, that it is one of the greatest joys that ever I had in the world to behold it. O, how many congregations are now plainly and frequently taught, that lived then in great obscurity! How many able, faithful men are there now in a county in comparison of what were then! How graciously hath God prospered the studies of many young men that were little children in the beginning of the late troubles; so that they now cloud the most of their seniors! How many miles would I have gone twenty years ago, and less, to have heard one of those ancient reverend divines, whose con-

[1] Among the Baxter MSS. is a letter from John Howe to Richard Vines, in which his circumstances, as chaplain in the Protector's family, are described as so uncomfortable, that he was determined to leave it. This letter conveys a stronger reflection on the character of Cromwell than any thing I have met with. "My call hither was to a work I thought very considerable; the setting-up the worship and discipline of Christ in this family, wherein I was to be joined with another, called in upon the same account. But I now see the designed work here hopelessly laid aside. We affect here to live in so loose a way, that a man cannot fix upon any certain charge, to carry towards them as a minister of Christ should: so that it were as hopeful a course to preach in a market, or any other assembly met by chance, as here. The affected disorderliness of this family, as to the matters of God's worship, whence arises my despair of doing good in it, I desire as much as possible to conceal; and therefore resolve to others to insist upon the low condition of the place I left, as the reason of my removal, if I do remove. To you I state the case more fully, but desire you to be very sparing in making it known, as it is here represented."—*Baxter MSS.* There are several letters from Howe to Baxter among these MSS. It is curious to find Howe speaking of himself as a "raw youth, bashful, pusilanimous, and solicitous about the flesh."

gregations are now grown thin, and their parts esteemed mean by reason of the notable improvements of their juniors!

"I hope I shall rejoice in God while I have a being, for the common change in other parts that I have lived to see; that so many hundred faithful men are so hard at work for the saving of souls, 'frementibus licet et frendentibus inimicis;' and that more are springing up apace. I know there are some men whose parts I reverence, who, being in point of government of another mind from them, will be offended at my very mention of this happy alteration; but I must profess if I were absolutely prelatical, if I knew my heart, I could not choose for all that but rejoice. What, not rejoice at the prosperity of the church, because men differ in opinion about its order! Should I shut my eyes against the mercies of the Lord? The souls of men are not so contemptible to me, that I should envy them the bread of life, because it is broken to them by a hand that had not the prelatical approbation. O that every congregation were thus supplied! but all cannot be done at once. They had a long time to settle a corrupted ministry; and when the ignorant and scandalous are cast out, we cannot create abilities in others for their supply; we must stay the time of their preparation and growth; and then if England drive not away the Gospel by their abuse, even by their wilful unreformedness and hatred of the light, they are likely to be the happiest nation under heaven. For, as for all the sects and heresies that are creeping in daily and troubling us, I doubt not but the free Gospel, managed by an able, self-denying ministry, will effectually disperse and shame them all."[k]

Cromwell being dead, his son Richard, by his will and testament, and by the army, was quietly settled in his place. "He interred his father with great pomp and solemnity. He called a parliament, and that without any such restraints as his father had used. The members took the oath of fidelity or allegiance to him at the door of the house, before they entered. And all men wondered to see every thing so quiet in so dangerous a time. Many sober men that called his father no better than a traitorous hypocrite, did begin to think that they owed him subjection; which I confess was the case with myself.

"The army set up Richard Cromwell, it seemed, upon trial, resolving to use him as he behaved himself: for though they

[k] Reformed Pastor, published in 1658.—Works, vol. xiv. pp. 152, 153.

swore fidelity to him, they meant to keep it no longer than he pleased them. When they saw that he began to favour the sober people of the land, to honour parliaments, and to respect the ministers, whom they called Presbyterians, they presently resolved to make him know his masters, and that it was *they*, and not *he*, who were called by God to be the chief protectors of the interest of the nation. He was not so formidable to them as his father had been, and therefore every one boldly spurned at him. The fifth monarchy-men followed Sir Henry Vane, and raised a great, violent, and clamorous party against him, among the sectaries in the city: Rogers, Feake, and such-like firebrands, preached them into fury, and blew the coals; but Dr. Owen and his assistants did the main work.[1]

"The Wallingford-house party, consisting of the active officers of the army, determined that Richard's parliament must be dissolved; and then he quickly fell himself. Though he never abated their liberties, or their greatness, he did not sufficiently befriend them. Though Colonel Ingolsby, and some others, would have stuck to the protector, and have ventured to surprise the leaders of the faction, and the parliament would have been true to him; Berry's regiment of horse, and some others, were ready to begin the fray against him. As he sought not the government, he was resolved it should cost no blood to keep him in it; but if they would venture for their parts to new confusions, he would venture his part by retiring to privacy. And so to satisfy these proud, distracted tyrants, who thought they did but pull down tyranny, he resigned the government, by a writing under his hand, and left them to govern as they pleased.

"His good brother-in-law, Fleetwood, and his uncle, Desborough, were so intoxicated as to be the leaders of the conspiracy; and when they had pulled him down, they set up a few of themselves under the name of a Council of State. So mad were they with pride, as to think the nation would stand by and reverence them, and obediently wait upon them in their drunken giddiness; and that their faction in the army was made by God an invincible terror to all that did but hear their names. The core of the business also was, that Oliver had once made Fleetwood believe, that he should be his successor, and had drawn

[1] For an account of Owen's conduct in this affair, see 'Memoirs of Owen,' pp. 213—215, second edition.

an instrument to that purpose; but his last will disappointed him. And then the sectaries flattered him, saying, that a truly godly man, who had commanded them in the wars, was to be preferred before such a one as they censured to have no true godliness."[m]

Richard Cromwell rose to the Protectorate without effort, and fell from it without much regret on his own part, and with none on the part of the country. The formidable difficulties, which had tried the genius and courage of the father, and had greatly accumulated before his death, soon overwhelmed the son. His talents, though not despicable, were not of the first order; and never having been bred a soldier, he was little qualified for managing the daring spirits by which he was surrounded. He was a lover of peace and a friend of religion, and had he quietly succeeded to a well-established throne, would have filled it with honour to himself, and advantage to his country. But it was a difficult affair to occupy the seat of a protector, and to maintain claims which were still regarded as those of a usurper. Surrounded by cabals of enemies, misled by the advice of injudicious friends, and terrified by the prospect of new civil convulsions, he had the wisdom to descend from the seat of power, without a struggle, which would only have been attended with a useless effusion of blood, and followed with certain defeat. "I have no doubt," says Baxter, "that God permitted all this for good; and that, as it was the treason of a military faction to set up Oliver, and destroy the king, so it was their duty to have set up the present king instead of Richard. Thus God made them the means, to their own destruction, contrary to their intentions, to restore the monarchy and family which they had ruined. But all this is no thanks to them; but that which, with a good intention, had been a duty, as done by them, was as barbarous perfidiousness as most history ever did declare. That they should so suddenly, so scornfully, and proudly pull down him whom they had so lately set up themselves, and sworn allegiance to; that they should do this without being able to tell themselves why they did it; that they should do it, while a parliament was sitting which had so many wise and religious members, and accomplish it, not only without

[m] Life, part i. pp. 100, 101. There are letters from Baxter to Sir James Nethersole, and Colonel Harley, about the affairs of the country during "Richard's usurpation, when men were raised to some vain hopes."—*Baxter MSS.*

the parliament's advice, but in spite of it, and force him to dissolve it first; that they should so proudly despise, not merely the parliament, but all the ministers of London and of the land; yea, and act against the judgments of most of their own party (the Independents), is altogether very wonderful."[n]

While the praise or blame of pulling down Richard is thus studiously ascribed, by Baxter, to a faction, consisting neither of the Presbyterians nor of the Independents, it is very evident, from his own statements afterwards, that the Presbyterians were more deeply concerned, both in the overthrow of the Commonwealth, and in the restoration of the monarchy, and in all the plotting, or, as he would have called it in others, the perfidiousness which these things involved, than he was disposed to admit. That party threw every possible difficulty in the way of the Commonwealth administration, because they were not of sufficient importance under it; and did all they could to bring back the king, whom they could not doubt would reward their fidelity, and comprehend them in the new establishment. They were taken effectually in their own snare, and were more severely punished and disappointed than any other.

Shortly after this, when Sir George Booth's rising failed, "Major-General Monk, in Scotland, with his army, grew so sensible of the insolence of Vane and Lambert, and the fanatics in England and Ireland, who set up and pulled down governments as boldly as if they were making a lord of a May game, and were grasping all the power into their own hands; that he presently secured the Anabaptists of his army, and agreed with the rest to resist those usurpers, who would have made England the scorn of all the world. At first, when he drew near to England, he declared for a free Commonwealth. When he came in, Lambert marched against him, but his soldiers forsaking him, and Sir Arthur Haselrigge getting Portsmouth, and Colonel Morley strengthening him, and Major-General Berry's regiment which went to block it up, revolting to them, the clouds rose everywhere at once, and Lambert could make no resistance; so that instead of fighting, they were fain to treat. While Monk held them treating, his reputation increased, and theirs abated; their hearts failed them, their soldiers fell off; and General Monk consulted with his friends what to do. Many counties sent letters of thanks and

[n] Life, part i. p. 101.

encouragement to him. Mr. Thomas Bampfield was sent by the gentlemen of the West, and other counties did the like; so that Monk came on, but still declared for a Commonwealth, against monarchy; till at last, when he saw all ripened thereto, he declared for the king. The chief men, as far as I can learn, who turned his resolution to bring in the king, were Mr. Clarges,[o] and Sir William Morris, his kinsman; the petitions and affections of the city of London, principally moved by Mr. Calamy and Mr. Ash, two ancient leading able ministers; with Dr. Bates, Dr. Manton, Dr. Jacomb, and other ministers of London who concurred. These were encouraged by the Earl of Manchester, the Lord Hollis, the late Earl of Anglesey, and many of the then council of state. The members of the old parliament, who had formerly been ejected, being recalled, dissolved themselves, and appointed the convening of a parliament which might recall the king. When General Monk first came into England, most men rejoiced, in hope to be delivered from the usurpation of the fanatics, Anabaptists, Seekers, &c. I was myself so much affected with the strange providence of God, that I procured the ministers to agree upon a public thanksgiving to God. I think all the victories which that army obtained, were not more wonderful than their fall was, when pride and error had prepared them for it. It seemed wonderful to me, that an army which had got so many great and marvellous victories, which thought themselves unconquerable, and talked of nothing but dominion at home, and marching up to the walls of Rome, should all be broken, brought into subjection, and finally disbanded, without one blow stricken, or one drop of blood shed! And that by so small a power as Monk's army in the beginning was. So eminent was the hand of God in all this change."[p]

Among all the dissemblers and hypocrites of a period abounding in the display of these qualities, Monk occupies a distinguished place. He is eulogised by Clarendon, and commended by Hume; and for his successful management in duping the army and the parliament, and restoring the exiled monarch on

[o] Clarges was originally an apothecary, but acting as physician to Monk's army, became M.D. He was afterwards created Sir Thomas Clarges, by Charles, for his services at the restoration. He was the son of a blacksmith, and brother to *Nan Clarges*, better known by that appellation than by her future title, the Duchess of Albemarle, a situation which she neither deserved, nor was qualified to fill.

[p] Life, part i. p. 214.

his own terms, he was rewarded with a dukedom.[q] Baxter had an interview with Monk after he came to London; which laid the foundation of a charge preferred against him by L'Estrange, in the ninety-sixth number of 'The Observator,' that he had endeavoured to influence Monk not to bring back the king. In reply to which, Baxter says:

"Dr. Manton (and whether any other, I remember not) went once with me to General Monk, to congratulate him; but with the request, that he would take care that debauchery and contempt of religion might not be let loose, upon any men's pretence of being for the king, as it already began with some to be. But there was not one word by me spoken (or by any one, to my remembrance) against his calling back the king; but as to me, it is a mere fiction. And the king was so sensible of the same that I said, that he sent over a proclamation against such men, as while they called themselves the king's party, did live in debauchery and profaneness; which proclamation so rejoiced them that were after Nonconformists, that they read it publicly in the churches."[r] Baxter's denial is entitled to the greatest confidence, as his conduct at the time of the restoration shows how heartily he rejoiced in it. But it is impossible not to marvel at the simplicity which gave Charles credit for wishing to put down debauchery and profaneness.

"As for myself," he says, "I came to London April the 13th, 1660, where I was no sooner arrived, but I was accosted by the Earl of Lauderdale, who was just then released from his tedious confinement in Windsor Castle, by the restored parliament, who having heard from some of the sectarian party, that my judgment was, that our obligations to Richard Cromwell were not dissolved, nor could be, till another parliament, or a fuller renunciation of the government, took a great deal of pains with me, to satisfy me in that point.[s] And for quieting people's

[q] "Monk no more intended or designed the king's restoration when he came into England, or first came to London, than his horse did; but shortly after finding himself at a loss, that he was *purposely* made odious to the city, and that he was a lost man, by the parliament, and that the generality of the city and country were for the restoring the king, he had no way to save himself but to close with the city."—*Aubrey*, ii. p. 455. The grand object and aim of Monk in all he did was his own aggrandisement.

[r] Calamy's Continuation, vol. iv. p. 911.

[s] It is evident from what Baxter himself says, that he was apprised at an early period of the attempt which was likely to be made to bring back the king. The unnatural union of the Cavaliers and the Presbyterians to effect this object, appears to have met with his approbation. A letter of his to Major

minds, which were in no small commotion through clandestine rumours, he, by means of Sir Robert Murray, and the Countess of Balcarras, then in France, procured several letters to be written from thence, full of high eulogiums on the king, and assurances of his firmness in the Protestant religion, which he got translated and published. Among others, one was sent to me from Monsieur Gaches, a famous, pious preacher at Charenton; wherein, after a high strain of compliment to myself, he gave a pompous character of the king, and assured me, that during his exile, he never forebore the public profession of the Protestant religion, no, not even in those places where it seemed prejudicial to his affairs. That he was present at divine worship in the French churches, at Rouen and Rochelle, though not at Charenton, during his stay at Paris; and earnestly pressed me to use my utmost interest, that the king might be restored by means of the Presbyterians.

"When I was in London, the new parliament being called, they presently appointed a day of fasting and prayer for themselves. The House of Commons chose Mr. Calamy, Dr. Gauden, and myself, to preach and pray with them, at St. Margaret's, Westminster. In that sermon, I uttered some passages which were afterwards matter of some discourse. Speaking of our differences, and the way to heal them, I told them that, whether we should be loyal to our king was none of our differences. In that, we were all agreed; it being as impossible that a man should be true to the Protestant principles and not be loyal; as it was impossible to be true to the Papist principles, and to be loyal. And for the concord now wished in matters of church government, I told them it was easy for moderate men to come to a fair agreement, and that the late reverend Primate of Ireland and myself had agreed in half an hour. I remember not the very words, but you may read them in the sermon, which was printed by order of the House of Commons.[t] The next

Beake was intercepted, but being written with caution, nothing could be made of it. He assigns no reason for leaving Kidderminster, and coming to London at this time; but I have no doubt it was to be present to aid and assist his Presbyterian brethren as circumstances might require. Sir Ralph Clare informed him of some things that were going on, and that if the restoration took place, a very moderate episcopacy would satisfy that party. This led Baxter to propose terms of union to Dr. Hammond, in consequence of which a correspondence took place, but which, like all such schemes, came to nothing.—*Life*, part ii. pp. 207—214.

[t] This sermon was preached on the 30th of April, 1660, and is printed in vol. xvii. of his Works. The subject is Repentance, the text Ezek. xxxvi. 31. He

morning after this day of fasting, the parliament unanimously voted home the king; doing that which former actions had but prepared for.

"The city of London, about that time, was to keep a day of solemn thanksgiving for General Monk's success; and the lord-mayor and alderman desired me to preach before them at St. Paul's church; wherein I so endeavoured to show the value of that mercy, as to show also, how sin and men's abuse might turn it into matter of calamity, and what should be right bounds and qualifications of that joy. The moderate were pleased with it; the fanatics were offended with me for keeping such a thanksgiving; and the diocesan party thought I did suppress their joy. The words may be seen in the sermon ordered to be printed."[u]

"When the king was sent for by the parliament, certain divines, with others, were also sent by the parliament and city to him into Holland: viz. Mr. Calamy, Dr. Manton, Mr. Bowles, and divers others; and some went voluntarily; to whom his majesty gave such encouraging promises of peace, as raised some of them to high expectations.[x] And when he came in, as he passed through the city towards Westminster, the London ministers in their places attended him with acclamations,[y]

dedicates it to the House of Commons, and speaks of the honour which he considered it, to conclude by preaching and prayer, the service which immediately preceded the vote of the House to recall his majesty. It is distinguished by his usual plainness and fidelity, and contains some eloquent passages. Few such sermons, I fear, have been preached in that house since then. His advice and requests to them as legislators were both sound and moderate.

[u] This sermon was preached on the 10th of May, 1660, and appears in vol. xvii. of his Works, under the title of "Right Rejoicing," founded on Luke x. 20. There is much admirable personal address in this discourse, and the allusions to political matters are brief and moderate.

[x] Charles duped the Presbyterian ministers by causing them to be placed within hearing of his secret devotions. The base hypocrisy of this man is a thousand times more revolting than any thing of the kind which belonged to Cromwell, and yet in Charles it is passed over with little reprobation.

[y] A very amusing account, if it were not for the melancholy issue, is given by Aubrey, of the intoxication of the people in the prospect of the king's return. On its being intimated by Monk, that there should be a free parliament, "Immediately a loud holla and shout was given, all the bells in the city ringing, and the whole city looked as if it had been in a flame by the bonfires, which were prodigiously great and frequent, and ran like a train over the city. They made little gibbets and roasted rumpes of mutton, naye I sawe some very good rumpes of beef. Health to King Charles II. was dranke in the streets, by the bonfires, even on their knees. This humour ran by the next night to Salisbury, where was the like joy; so to Chalke, where they made a great bonfire on the top of the hill; from thence to Blandford and Shaftesbury, and so to the Land's End. Well! a free parlia-

and by the hands of old Mr. Arthur Jackson, presented him with a richly-adorned Bible, which he received, and told them, it should be the rule of his actions."[z]

Thus terminated the rule of the Commonwealth and the dynasty of the Cromwells, and recommenced the reign of the legitimate Stuarts. Baxter's narrative notices some of the causes and instruments of the extraordinary revolution which now took place, with a rapidity and unexpectedness that appear like magical rather than real events. But the true causes were more deeply seated than his account would lead us to suppose. Neither the conduct of the fanatical sectaries, nor the weakness of Richard, at all explains the downfall of the Commonwealth, and the restoration of the royal family. That family had always a powerful and influential party in the country, consisting of the old nobility and their retainers; the church had never entirely lost its hold of a considerable body of the population; Presbyterianism was too rigid a system to suit the temper and genius of the multitude; the ambition of Cromwell had lost him the affection of his republican associates, and destroyed the confidence and respect of the Independents and minor sects. Tired of the versatility and duplicity of a man, who was great, but never dignified; feared, but not loved or respected; and possessed by a blind attachment to the exiled monarchy, it required only the favourable opportunity of the old Protector's death, and the concurrence of a few other circumstances, to produce the marvellous change which occurred.

Charles began by playing the hypocrite with those who had been deceived with their eyes open; but he soon threw off the vizor, to their terrible dismay. Nothing more strikingly illustrates the strength of attachment to monarchy, which seems to be inherent

ment was chosen, and Sir Harbottle Grimston was chosen Speaker. The first thing he put to the question was, Whether Charles Stuart should be sent for, or no? Yea, yea, *nem. con.* Sir Thomas Greenhill was then in towne, and posted away to Brussells, found the king at dinner, little dreaming of so good news, rises presently from dinner, had his coach immediately made ready, and that night got out of the King of Spain's dominions, into the Prince of Orange's country. Now, as the morn grows lighter and lighter, and more glorious till it is perfect day, so it was with the joy of the people. Maypoles, which in the hypocritical times 'twas —— to set up, now were set up in every cross way; and at the Strand near Drury Lane, was set up the most prodigious one for height, that, perhaps, ever was seen; they were fain, I remember, to have the seaman's art to elevate it. The juvenile and rustic folks at that time had so much of desire of this kind, that I think there have been very few set up since."—*Aubrey's Miscel.* vol. ii. pp. 454, 456.

[z] Life, part i. pp. 214—218.

in the English character, than the facts which have been briefly glanced at. All that the people, the religious and well-informed people, had suffered from the cruel oppressions of the Stuart family was forgotten; not because Cromwell had used them worse (for they had enjoyed great quietness and security under his administration), but because there was no royal blood in his veins, and the absence of the port and high bearing of a monarch by divine right. The impatience to recall the exiled family, the readiness to be duped by the oaths and promises of a profligate prince, who had learned nothing from his banishment but the vices of the people among whom he sojourned, are evidences of infatuation of the most extraordinary kind; which show that the people of England had not yet been sufficiently disciplined and prepared for the enjoyment of freedom.

The leading instruments in effecting the restoration, may be entitled to respect for their royalty, but deserve little credit for their patriotism, their disinterestedness, or their wisdom. The hypocrisy and dissimulation of Monk, the murmuring of the Royalists, and the infatuation of the Presbyterian ministers, were all part of the machinery by which Providence accomplished its purposes. While we mark the hand of God, and adore the justice of his Providence in punishing a nation's sins, the parties who were instrumental in this punishment, and the principles which actuated them, have no claim to our gratitude or respect.

Baxter's conduct during the several changes which have been noticed, does credit to his conscientiousness rather than to his wisdom. He acted with the Parliament, but maintained the rights of the King; he enjoyed the benefits of the Protectorate, but spoke and reasoned against the Protector; he hailed the return of Charles, but doubted whether he was freed from allegiance to Richard. The craft and duplicity of Cromwell, he detected and exposed; but the gross dissimulation and heartless indifference of Charles to every thing except his own gratification, it was long before he could be persuaded to believe. Abstract principles and refined distinctions, in these as in some other matters, influenced his judgment more than plain matters of fact. Speculations, *de jure* and *de facto*, often occupied and distracted his mind, and fettered his conduct, while another man would have formed his opinions on a few obvious principles and facts, and have done both as a subject and a Christian all that circumstances and the Scriptures required.

Before taking our leave of Kidderminster, to which place

Baxter never returned with a view to fixed residence or ministerial labour after the restoration, a few facts remain to be stated, to complete the view of his life and exertions during this important and active period.

The statement of his labours contained in the preceding chapter, by no means includes all that he did during this busy interval of his life. In fact, he tells us that the labours of the pulpit and the congregation were but his recreation; and that his chief labour was bestowed on his writings. A bare enumeration of these, of which a full account will be given in a subsequent part of this work, would justify this declaration, strong as it may appear to be. It is, indeed, marvellous, that a man who would seem to have been wholly engaged with preaching in public and in private; and who was no less marked for the number and variety of his bodily infirmities, than for the multiplicity of his ministerial avocations, and who seemed to have lived only in the atmosphere of a printing-office; should, under all these disadvantages, have produced volumes with the ease that other men issue tracts.

During the fourteen years of his second residence at Kidderminster, he found time partly to write and publish his Aphorisms, and Saint's Rest. He wrote and published, beside other things, his works on Infant Baptism—On Peace of Conscience—On Perseverance—On Christian Concord—His Apology—His Confession of Faith—His Unreasonableness of Infidelity—His Reformed Pastor—His Disputations on right to the Sacraments—Those on Church Government—And on Justification—His Safe Religion—His Call to the Unconverted—On the Crucifying of the World—On Saving Faith—On Confirmation—On Sound Conversion—On Universal Concord—His Key for Catholics—His Christian Religion—His Holy Commonwealth—His Treatise on Death—And, On Self-denial, &c., &c.

When it is reflected on that many of these books are considerable quarto volumes, and that they make a large proportion of his practical works now republished, beside including several of his controversial pieces, I must leave the reader to form his own opinion of the indefatigable application and untiring zeal of this extraordinary man. The reading displayed in them, the correspondence to which they frequently led, and the diversity of subjects which they embrace, illustrate at once the indefatigable diligence of Baxter, and the extraordinary versatility of his mind.

He also found time, during this period, to propose and to

prosecute several schemes of union and concord among various classes of Christians, which led to an extensive correspondence, and to long personal conferences, which must have consumed no small portion of his strength and leisure. Beside other plans that occupied much of his attention, and which produced discussion and correspondence, he gives an account of three several schemes of union with the Independents; all of which failed, owing to the difficulties encumbering the subject, but which he laboured to remove. One of these schemes had brought on a long correspondence and several interviews with Dr. Owen. But the Diocesans, as he calls them, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists, also engaged his attention with a view to union, as well as the Independents, and with the same success.

One of his most useful employments, about the period of the king's return, was a negociation respecting the propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians. During the Commonwealth, a collection by order of Government, had been made in every parish in England, to assist Mr. Elliot (celebrated as the apostle of the Indians) and some others in this most benevolent undertaking. The contributions were laid out partly in stock, and partly in land, to the amount of seven or eight hundred pounds per annum, and were vested in a corporate body, to be employed on behalf of the Indians. After the king's return, Colonel Beddingfield, from whom the land had been purchased at its proper value, seized it again; on the unjust pretext, that all that was done in Cromwell's time, was null and void in law, and that the corporation formed, had no longer any legal existence. The corporation, of which Mr. Ashurst was treasurer, consisted of excellent persons. They were exceedingly grieved that the object for which the money had been raised, should thus be entirely and iniquitously defeated. Baxter being requested to meet them, and to assist by his counsel and influence, which he readily did, was employed to procure if possible a new charter of corporation from the king. This, chiefly through the influence of the Lord Chancellor, he happily obtained. His lordship also, in a suit in chancery, respecting the property, decided against the claims of Beddingfield. Mr. Ashurst and Baxter had the nomination of the new members; the I n. Robert Boyle, at their recommendation, was made president or governor; Mr. Ashurst was reappointed as treasurer;

and the whole matter put into a state of excellent and efficient operation.

This affair brought Baxter into intimate correspondence with Elliot, Norton, Governor Endicott of Massachusetts, and some other excellent men who were engaged in the good work, or otherwise interested in the religious affairs of New England. The correspondence with Elliot continued during a considerable portion of the remainder of both their lives. That distinguished man was honoured to lead many poor savages of the American woods to the knowledge of God; and, to accomplish a translation of the entire Scriptures into their language, one of the most difficult for a foreigner to acquire. It is highly gratifying to observe how fully Baxter entered into these missionary labours; and that at a period when the subject of missions was little understood, he not only regarded it as a great work, in which Christians are required to engage, but co-operated with those who were engaged in it to the utmost of his power. I cannot resist introducing an extract from one of his letters to Elliot, though written after the period to which this chapter properly belongs.

"Though our sins have separated us from the people of our love and care, and deprived us of all public liberty of preaching the Gospel of our Lord, I greatly rejoice in the liberty, help, and success, which Christ hath so long vouchsafed you in his work. There is no man on earth, whose work I think more honourable and comfortable than yours: to propagate the Gospel and kingdom of Christ into those dark parts of the world, is a better work than our devouring and hating one another. There are many here, who would be ambitious of being your fellow labourers, but that they are informed you have access to no greater number of the Indians than you yourself, and your present assistants, are able to instruct. An honourable gentleman, Mr. Robert Boyle, the governor of the corporation for your work, a man of great learning and worth, and of a very public, universal mind, did mention to me a public collection in all our churches, for the maintaining of such ministers as are willing to go hence to you, partly while they are learning the Indian language, and partly while they labour in the work, as also to transport them. But I find those backward that I have spoken to about it, partly suspecting it a design of such as would be rid of them; partly fearing that when the money is gathered, the work may be frustrated by the alie-

nation of it; partly because they think there will be nothing considerable gathered, because the people that are unwillingly divorced from their teachers, will give nothing to send them further from them, and those that are willingly separated from them, will give nothing to those they no more respect; but specially, because they think, on the aforesaid grounds, that there is no work for them to do if they were with you. There are many here, I conjecture, who would be glad to go anywhere, to the Persians, Tartarians, Indians, or any unbelieving nation, to propagate the Gospel, if they thought they would be serviceable; but the difficulty of their languages is their greatest discouragement. The universal character that you speak of, many have talked of, and one hath printed his essay; and his way is only by numerical figures, making such and such figures to stand for the words of the same signification in all tongues, but nobody regards it. I shall communicate your motion here about the Hebrew, but we are not of such large and public minds as you imagine; every one looks to his own concernment, and some to the things of Christ that are near them at their own doors. But if there be one Timothy that naturally careth for the state of the churches, we have no man, of a multitude more, like-minded; but all seek their own things. We had one Dury here, that hath above thirty years laboured for the reconciling of the churches, but few have regarded him, and now he is glad to escape from us into other countries. Good men who are wholly devoted to God, and by long experience are acquainted with the interest of Christ, are ready to think all others should be like them, but there is no hope of bringing any more than here and there an experienced, holy, self-denying person, to get so far above their personal concernments, and narrowness of mind, and so wholly to devote themselves to God. The industry of the Jesuits and friars, and their successes in Congo, Japan, China, &c., shame us all save you; but yet, for their personal labours in the work of the Gospel, here are many that would be willing to lay out, where they have liberty and a call, though scarce any that will do more in furthering great and public works. I should be glad to learn from you how far your Indian tongue extendeth: how large or populous the country is that useth it, if it be known; and whether it reach only to a few scattered neighbours, who cannot themselves convey their knowledge far, because of other languages. We very much rejoice in your happy work, the translation of the Bible, and bless

God that strengthened you to finish it. If any thing of mine may be honoured to contribute, in the least measure, to your blessed work, I shall have great cause to be thankful to God, and wholly submit the alteration and use of it to your wisdom. Methinks the Assemblies' Catechism should be, next the holy Scriptures, most worthy of your labours." [d]

This admirable letter shows how deeply Baxter entered into the philanthropic views which were then so rare, but which have since been so generally adopted by Christians. How would his noble spirit have exulted had he lived to witness, even with all their imperfections, the extended exertions of modern times. How ardently would he have supported every scheme of sending the Scriptures, or the knowledge of salvation, to the destitute parts of the world! If there is joy in heaven, over the plans of earth which tend to the furtherance of the Gospel, Baxter, though removed from the scene of labour and of trial, is no doubt exulting in much that is now going forward.

His correspondence during his residence in Kidderminster, must have been exceedingly extensive and laborious; the existing remains of it affording decisive proof of its multifarious character, and of the application which it must have required. He was employed on all occasions of a public nature where the interests of his brethren in the ministry, or the cause of religion among them, required the co-operation or counsel of others. As the agent of the ministers of Worcestershire, he addressed the Provincial Assembly of London in 1654, calling their attention to the state of the Psalmody, and requesting them to adopt measures for its improvement.[b] On the other hand, he was requested by Calamy, Whitfield, Jenkyns, Ash, Cooper, Wickens, and Poole, to assist them in an answer which they were preparing to the Independents.[c] What aid he afforded does not appear. We cannot doubt his disposition to assist his brethren, though it is not probable he and they would have agreed, either in their mode of defending Presbyterianism or of attacking Independency.

He was consulted by Manton, in 1658, about a scheme for calling a general assembly of the ministers of England, to determine certain matters, and arrange their ecclesiastical affairs.

[a] Life, part ii. p. 295. There are many letters which passed between Baxter and Elliot, still preserved among the Baxter MSS. in the Redcross Street Library.

[b] Baxter MSS. [c] Ibid.

To this he returned an answer expressive of doubts of its practicability and expediency. He was friendly to such associations; but, from the state of the country at the time, he probably felt that nothing of importance could be effected. Indeed there is no reason to think that Cromwell would have permitted any such general assembly of the Presbyterian clergy to take place in England, when he would not allow them to hold such meetings in Scotland.

Both Lord Lauderdale and Major Robert Beake introduced to Baxter, in 1657, the Rev. James Sharpe, a minister of the church of Scotland, who came to London on the public business of that church, which he afterwards vilely betrayed. He was rewarded for his treachery at a future period, with the archbishoprick of St. Andrews, where at last he lost his life by the hands of a few individuals, who thus chose to avenge their country's wrongs. Of his piety, Lauderdale and Beake speak strongly; and he probably was at this time a very different man from what he had become when he fell before the wiles of a court, and the lure of an archbishop's mitre.[d]

Beside all this, Baxter was consulted by great numbers of his brethren in the ministry in various parts of the country, respecting matters in which they were concerned; and by a multitude of private individuals, on cases of conscience, which he was requested to solve. To all these he returned, often, long and minute letters, the manual labour of which must have been very considerable, especially as he kept copies of many of them.[e]

[d] Baxter MSS. Sharpe was sent to London again immediately before the Restoration, with a view to negociate the interests of the church of Scotland. He returned after the King was re-established, with a plausible letter signed by Lauderdale, in the name of the King. He was afterwards rewarded for his treachery and apostacy by the Primacy of Scotland. It is impossible to justify his murder; but the poor people of Scotland had been driven to desperation by long-continued oppression.

[e] There are some hundreds of these letters among the Redcross Street MSS.; many of them curious, though relating to individuals and subjects which would not now interest the public. Baxter had a long correspondence with Gataker, chiefly on the subjects of infant baptism and original sin. Gataker exceedingly bewails the differences that then subsisted among Christians, and says "they may well be lamented with an ocean of tears." He had a laborious correspondence with Dr. Hill, about predestination, a subject on which Baxter wrote a great deal. Besides what he published on it, there is enough remaining among his unpublished manuscripts to make a volume or two. Many letters also passed between him and Tombes, Poole, Dury, Wadsworth, Bates, and Howe. There are, also, many letters to and from correspondents, both male and female, of the names of Allan and Lambe, who seem to have enjoyed no small portion of his attention. Some of these are printed in his Life by Sylvester.

In these active and multifarious labours, Baxter spent fourteen of the happiest and most useful years of his life. Unceasingly engaged in some useful pursuit, his mind found sufficient scope and employment for that energy by which it was eminently distinguished. There were many evils then, indeed, as well as at other times, which he greatly deplored; but there was so great a preponderance of good when compared with the period which preceded, and with that which followed it, that often he lamented the prosperous days he had enjoyed during the usurpation, when they had passed away. Instead, therefore, of having to record his various plans of benevolence, and rejoicing over the success attending them, we must henceforth hear chiefly of his fruitless struggles for peace, and for liberty to preach the Gospel; of the disappointment which followed negociations; of the anguish experienced from the restriction of his ministry; of confiscations, imprisonment, and being unceasingly harassed for conscience' sake.

CHAPTER VII.

1660—1662.

The Restoration—Views of the Nonconformists—Conduct of the Court towards them—Baxter's desire of Agreement—Interview with the King—Baxter's Speech—The Ministers requested to draw up their Proposals—Meet at Sion College for this purpose—Present their paper to the King—Many Ministers ejected already—The King's Declaration—Baxter's objections to it—Presented to the Chancellor in the form of a Petition—Meeting with his Majesty to hear the Declaration—Declaration altered—Baxter, Calamy, and Reynolds, offered Bishopricks—Baxter declines—Private interview with the King—The Savoy Conference—Debates about the mode of proceeding—Baxter draws up the Reformed Liturgy—Petition to the Bishops—No disposition to agreement on their part—Answer to their former papers—Personal debate—Character of the leading parties on both sides—Issue of the Conference.

CHARLES II. was received with general acclamation; which can only be accounted for from that love of change which is characteristic of nations as well as of individuals; from the sickening influence of Cromwell's ambition, and the imbecility of his son; from the disgust felt by many at the fanaticism of the times; together with that love of monarchy—its pomp and circumstance—which constitutes a distinguishing feature in the character of Englishmen. That Charles deceived the people by his professions, is clear; but they might easily have obtained such a knowledge of his principles, habits, and sentiments, had they been disposed to make what inquiry the nature of the case seemed to demand, as might have prevented the deception from taking effect. They imagined that the sufferings endured by the royal family would cure, or at least moderate, that hereditary love of arbitrary power, and attachment to Popery, which had caused most of those sufferings; that Charles was perhaps too much a man of the world, to make the costly sacrifices for a religious party which his father had made; and that they might easily form such an agreement with him as should effectually limit his power, and secure their rights. In all this they dis-

covered their own weakness and simplicity. In fact, Charles returned on his own terms, and was left as unfettered as if he had come in by conquest; saving a few oaths, which he swallowed without scruple, and broke without remorse.[f] The bitter effects of this misguided zeal and imprudence, none had greater reason to feel and to deplore than the Presbyterian portion of the Puritans, who were greatly instrumental in promoting the Restoration.

The views of the leading men of their party were, on some points, discordant; but they all agreed in welcoming the exiled monarch, and in anticipating, from the re-establishment of monarchy and the constitution, the enjoyment not only of protection and liberty, (for these they had fully enjoyed under the usurpation,) but of a system of church government modified to meet their views, and by which they should be comprehended in the ecclesiastical establishment of the country.

It was necessary, in the circumstances in which Charles found himself, not to offend these men; the episcopal party also being still weak, found it expedient to treat them with apparent respect. Several of the ministers were accordingly chosen to be king's chaplains.[g] Calamy, Reynolds, Ash, and several others, among whom was Baxter, had this honour; and Reynolds, Calamy, Spurstow, and Baxter, each preached once before his majesty. Manchester[h]

[f] Charles took the covenant three several times; once at the completion of the treaty abroad, again at his landing in Scotland, and a third time when he was crowned at Scone; while it is impossible to believe that he ever had the least serious intention to observe it. Though it is considered that Charles was a Papist, or an infidel, nothing can excuse his want of principle in taking this oath; and as the profligacy of his character could scarcely be unknown to the party which required the oath, it is difficult to excuse their conduct in imposing it, or in being satisfied to be deceived by Charles submitting himself to it.

[g] Baxter says, "When I was invited by Lord Broghill, afterwards Earl of Orrery, to meet him at the Lord Chamberlain's, they both persuaded me to accept the place. I desired to know whether it were his majesty's desire, or only the effect of their favourable request to him. They told me that it was his majesty's *own desire, and that he would take it as an acceptable furtherance of his service.* Thereupon I took the oath from the Lord Chamberlain." The date of his certificate is June 26, 1660.—*Life*, part ii. p. 229. Dr. Peirce, the decided adversary of Baxter, thought proper to dispute whether he was king's chaplain, when he published the sermon preached before his majesty, and annexed that title to his name. The certificate, however, speaks for itself.

[h] Edward, Earl of Manchester, was a nobleman of many great and amiable qualities. He was a zealous and able friend of liberty. During the civil commotions he was one of the avowed patriots in the House of Peers, and the only member of that house who was accused, by Charles, of high treason, along with the five members of the House of Commons. He took an active

and Broghill were the noblemen who chiefly managed these affairs at the time. In conversation with them, Baxter mentioned the importance, and what he regarded as the facility, of an agreement between the Episcopalians and the moderate Presbyterians; and the happy consequences to the civil and religious interests of the country which would result from such a union. The effect of this conversation he has recorded.

"Lord Broghill[1] was pleased to come to me, and told me, that he had proposed to the king a conference for an agreement, and that the king took it very well, and was resolved to further it. About the same time, the Earl of Manchester signified as much to Mr. Calamy; so that Mr. Calamy, Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Ash, and myself, went to the Earl of Manchester, then lord chamberlain; and after consulting about the business with him, he determined on a day to bring us to the king. Mr. Calamy advised that all of us who were the king's chaplains might be called to the consultation; so that we four might not seem to take too much upon us without others. So, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, and Dr. Spurstow, &c., went with us to the king; who, with the Lord Chancellor, and the Earl of St. Alban's, came to us in the Lord Chamberlain's lodgings.

"We exercised more boldness, at first, than afterwards would have been borne. When some of the rest had congratulated his majesty's happy Restoration, and declared the large hope which

part in the wars on the side of the Parliament, and was one of the leaders of the Presbyterian party. After the battle of Newbury, he was suspected of favouring the king's interest. He was a decided friend of the Restoration, and was immediately after it appointed chamberlain of the household. It is evident, from various circumstances, that he was a real friend of the Nonconformists, and bore to Baxter, in particular, a very cordial attachment. An occurrence once happened at his table, when Baxter was dining with him, which gave the good man great concern, and in which his lordship, as soon as apprised of it, acted with great propriety and kindness.—*Life*, part ii. p. 289.

[1] Roger Boyle, Baron of Broghill, was a native of Ireland, third son of the first Earl of Cork, and brother to the Honourable Robert Boyle. He took an active part in the civil wars, on the parliamentary side. He was regarded, by all parties, as a man of very considerable ability and address. He enjoyed a large share of the Protector's favour and confidence; was president of his council for Scotland, and one of the lords of his upper house. He favoured the Restoration, however, and was created Earl of Orrery on the 5th of September, 1660. He was also nominated, the same year, Lord President of Munster, for life. His lordship died in the year 1679. There seems to have been a considerable intimacy between him and Baxter. It was in his lordship's house Baxter became acquainted with Archbishop Usher. He dedicates one of his works to him, and often refers to him in his life, generally calling him by his first title, Lord Broghill.

they had of a cordial union among all dissenters by his means I presumed to speak to him of the concernments of religion, and how far we were from desiring the continuance of any factions or parties in the church, and how much a happy union would conduce to the good of the land, and to his majesty's satisfaction. I assured him that though there were turbulent, fanatic persons in his dominions, those whose peace we humbly craved of him were no such persons; but such as longed after concord, and were truly loyal to him, and desired no more than to live under him a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. But that as there were differences between them and their brethren, about some ceremonies or discipline of the church, we humbly craved his majesty's favour for the ending of those differences; it being easy for him to interpose, that so the people might not be deprived of their faithful pastors, and ignorant, scandalous, unworthy ones obtruded on them.

"I presumed to tell him, that the people we spoke for were such as were contented with an interest in heaven, and the liberty and advantages of the Gospel to promote it; and that if these were taken from them, and they were deprived of their faithful pastors, and liberty of worshipping God, they would take themselves as undone in this world, whatever else they should enjoy: that thus the hearts of his most faithful subjects, who hoped for his help, would even be broken; and that we doubted not but his majesty desired to govern a people made happy by him, and not a broken-hearted people. I presumed to tell him, that the late usurpers so well understood their own interest, that to promote it, they had found the way of doing good to be the most effectual means; and had placed and encouraged many thousand faithful ministers in the church, even such as detested their usurpation; and that so far had they attained their ends hereby, that it was the principal means of their interest in the people; wherefore, I humbly craved his majesty, that as he was our lawful king, in whom all his people were prepared to centre, so he would be pleased to undertake this blessed work of promoting their holiness and concord; and that he would never suffer himself to be tempted to undo the good which Cromwell, or any other, had done, because they were usurpers that did it; or discountenance a faithful ministry, because his enemies had set them up; but that he would rather outgo them in doing good, and opposing and rejecting the ignorant and ungodly, of what opinion or party soever; that the people whose cause we recom-

mended to him, had their eyes on him as the officer of God, to defend them in the possession of the helps of their salvation; which if he were pleased to vouchsafe them, their estates and lives would cheerfully be offered to his service.

"I humbly besought him that he would never suffer his subjects to be tempted to have favourable thoughts of the late usurpers, by seeing the vice indulged which they suppressed; or the godly ministers or people discountenanced whom they encouraged; and that all his enemies' conduct could not teach him a more effectual way to restore the reputation and honour of the usurpers than to do worse than they, and destroy the good which they had done. And, again, I humbly craved that no misrepresentations might cause him to believe, that because some fanatics have been factious and disloyal, therefore the religious people in his dominions, who are most careful of their souls, are such, though some of them may be dissatisfied about some forms and ceremonies in God's worship, which others use: and that none of them might go under so ill a character with him, by misreports behind their backs, till it were proved of them personally, or they had answered for themselves: for we, that better knew them than those that were likely to be their accusers, did confidently testify to his majesty, on their behalf, that they are resolved enemies of sedition, rebellion, disobedience, and divisions, which the world should see, and their adversaries be convinced of, if his majesty's wisdom and clemency did but remove those occasions of scruple in some points of discipline and worship.

"I, further, humbly craved, that the freedom and plainness of these expressions to his majesty might be pardoned, as being extorted by the present necessity, and encouraged by our revived hopes. I told him also, that it was not for Presbyterians, or any party, as such, that we were speaking, but for the religious part of his subjects in general, than whom no prince on earth had better. I also represented to him how considerable a part of that kingdom he would find them to be; and of what great advantage their union would be to his majesty, to the people, and to the bishops themselves, and how easily it might be procured—by making only things necessary to be the terms of union—by the true exercise of church discipline against sin,—and by not casting out the faithful ministers that must exercise it, and obtruding unworthy men upon the people: and how easy it was to avoid the violating of men's solemn vows and covenants,

without hurt to any others. And finally, I requested that we might be heard speak for ourselves, when any accusations were brought against us." [k]

In this long address, we cannot but admire the good sense and honesty of Baxter, who could thus fully and delicately instruct his majesty in his duty, and in the true interests of his government and the country. Happy would it have been for Charles, had he listened to such counsels; but from his well-known character, we can have little doubt that he was at this time laughing at the simplicity of the venerable men who were pleading before him the rights of God and their fellow subjects. A better illustration of casting pearls before swine, could not easily be found than what this address presents. It was quite appropriate to plead with Charles, his solemn promises, to remind him of his engagements, to place before him the circumstances and expectations of his subjects, and to urge upon him the encouragement of some, and the protection of all religious people. But to talk to such a man of discountenancing sin, and promoting godliness, or to entertain any expectation that he would pay the least attention to such things, shows that the parties thus addressing him were better Christians than politicians. Policy required, however, that he should treat them decently for a time; and hence he deceived them by an appearance of candour and kindness, and by promises never intended to be fulfilled.

"The king," says Baxter, "gave us not only a free audience, but as gracious an answer as we could expect; professing his gladness to hear our inclinations to agreement, and his resolution to do his part to bring us together; and that it must not be by bringing one party over to the other, but by abating somewhat on both sides, and meeting in the midway; and that if it were not accomplished, it should be owing to ourselves and not to him. Nay, that he was resolved to see it brought to pass, and that he would draw us together himself, with some more to that purpose. Insomuch that old Mr. Ash burst out into tears of joy, and could not forbear expressing what gladness this promise of his majesty had put into his heart." [l]

Whether Charles himself really wished, at this time, to effect some kind of union between the parties, but was diverted from it by the high-church men who were about him, it is difficult to

[k] Life, part ii. pp. 230, 231. [l] Ibid. p. 231.

say. The probability is, he would have cared nothing about it if he could have quieted both classes, at least for a time, and thus got himself firmly established on the throne. He, no doubt, bore the Puritans a deadly grudge, for having, as he conceived, destroyed his father, and driven himself into exile. But there were those around him who hated them quite as heartily, and who were determined, if possible, to make their yoke heavier than before. To these men there is full evidence that all the obnoxious measures which led to the act of uniformity, and to the unmerited sufferings which arose from it, properly belong.

Had there been a disposition to promote peace and union, one of two courses might have been pursued; either of which would have accomplished the objects, or at least, have prevented an open rupture. The adoption of such a liturgy and form of church government as the moderate men of both parties might approve: this was most ardently desired by Baxter and many of those with whom he acted; and was not by any means impracticable. Or failing that, to waive enforcing uniformity of worship and ecclesiastical order upon the then-incumbents of different sentiments on these points, while they lived, and which they were entitled to expect from the king's declaration at Breda. The court had this measure entirely in its own power. On this plan a prospective act of uniformity might have been passed, which would have gradually effected the favourite object, without inflicting tremendous suffering on conscientious men, and an incurable wound on the church itself. Every principle of integrity and good policy ought to have secured the interests of the Nonconformists; though I doubt whether the interests of religion in the nation would ultimately have been so effectually promoted, as by the course pursued. The hardest, the most unjust, the most oppressive measure that could be adopted, was the rigorous enforcement of episcopacy and the liturgy, with all their concomitants, on pious and conscientious men. For this, whoever was the party chiefly concerned in it, no apology can be found. It was an unnecessary and a cruel act of despotism.

"Either at this time or shortly after, the king required us to draw up and offer him such proposals as we thought meet, in order to agreement about church government, for that was the main difference; if that were agreed upon, there would be little danger of differing in the rest: and he desired us to set down the most that we could yield to.

"We told him, that we were but few men, and had no com-

mission from any of our brethren to express their minds; and therefore desired that his majesty would give us leave to acquaint our brethren in the country with it, and take them with us. The king answered, this would be too tedious, and make too much noise; and therefore we should do what we could ourselves only, with those of the city we could take with us. And when we then professed that we presumed not to give the sense of others, or oblige them; and that what we did must signify but the minds of so many as were present; he answered, that it should signify no more, and that he did not intend to call an assembly of the other party, but would bring a few, such as he thought meet; and that if he thought good to advise with a few of each side, for his own satisfaction, none had cause to be offended at it.

"We also craved that, at the same time, when we offered our concessions to the king, the brethren on the other side might bring in theirs, containing also the uttermost that they could abate and yield to us for concord, that seeing both together, we might see what probability of success we had. And the king promised that it should be so.

"We hereupon departed, and appointed to meet from day to day at Sion College, and to consult there openly with any of our brethren that would please to join us, that none might say they were excluded. Some city ministers came among us, and some came not; and divers country ministers, who were in the city, came also to us; as Dr. Worth, since a bishop in Ireland, Mr. Fulwood, since archdeacon of Totness; but Mr. Matthew Newcomen was most constant in assisting us.

"In these debates, we found the great inconvenience of too many actors, though there cannot be too many consenters to what is well done: for that which seemed the most convenient expression to one, seemed inconvenient to another; and we who all agreed in matter, had much ado to agree in words. But after about two or three weeks' time, we drew up a paper of proposals, which, with Archbishop Usher's form of government, called his reduction, we should offer to the king. Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds drew up the most of them; Dr. Worth and Dr. Reynolds drew up what was against the ceremonies; the abstract which was laid before the king I drew up."[m]

It is evident that both caution and good sense mark all these

[m] Life, part ii. pp. 231, 232.

proceedings. Nothing could be fairer, if something was to be conceded by both parties, than that each should state what it was ready to give up or to modify; it would then have been seen at once, whether the parties were likely to agree on any common basis. The Nonconformists, it is clear, were not backward to offer concessions; and had they been met with a conciliatory spirit by the church party, matters would not have proceeded to the extremity which they did. As some of their papers, even those against ceremonies, were drawn up by Reynolds and Worth, who both afterwards conformed, and were made bishops, their proposals must have been very reasonable.

The paper referred to by Baxter, drawn up in the most respectful manner, and containing very moderate propositions, was laid before his majesty. It embraced the leading points of difference relating to church government, the liturgy, and ceremonies, on which such extended controversies had been maintained. Usher's scheme of a reduced episcopacy (a kind of presbyterian episcopate, in which the bishop is regarded rather as the permanent moderator in the synods or councils of his brethren, the *primus inter pares*, than as clothed with independent authority, and exclusive rights and privileges) was the basis of their proposition on this head. They agreed on the lawfulness of a liturgy, but objected to its rigorous enforcement, and to several parts of the Book of Common Prayer which required amendment. They also pointed out the various ceremonies in divine service at which they were offended; such as the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross at baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and kneeling at the altar. All these particulars and requests they humbly laid at his majesty's feet. They also presented Usher's own model as drawn up in 1641.

"When we went," says Baxter, "with these foresaid papers to the king, and expected there to meet the divines of the other party, according to promise, with their proposals also, containing the lowest terms which they would yield to for peace, we saw not a man of them, nor any papers from them of that nature, no, not to this day; but it was not fit for us to expostulate or complain. His majesty very graciously renewed his professions, I must not call them promises, that he would bring us together, and see that the bishops should come down and yield on their part; and when he heard our papers read, he seemed well pleased with them, and told us, he was glad that

we were for a liturgy and yielded to the essence of episcopacy, and, therefore, he doubted not of our agreement; with much more, which we thought meet to recite in our following addresses, by way of gratitude, and for other reasons easy to be conjectured.

"Yet was not Bishop Usher's model the same in all points that we could wish; but it was the best that we could have the least hope, I say not to obtain, but acceptably to make them any offers of; for had we proposed any thing below archbishops and bishops, we should but have suddenly furnished them with plausible reasons for the rejecting of all further attempts of concord, or any other favour from them.

"Before this time, by the king's return, many hundred worthy ministers were displaced, and cast out of their charges; because they were in sequestrations where others had by the parliament been cast out. Our earnest desires had been, that all such should be cast out as were in any benefice belonging formerly to a man that was not grossly insufficient or debauched; but that all who succeeded such as these scandalous ones, should hold their places.

"These wishes being vain, and all the old ones restored, the king promised that the places where any of the old ones were dead, should be confirmed to the possessors: but many others got the broad seal for them, and the matter was not great; for we were all of us to be endured but a little longer. However, we agreed to offer five requests to the king, which he received." [n]

These requests related to a speedy answer from himself to their proposals about agreement, to a suspension of proceedings upon the act of conformity till such agreement were come to or refused, and some other matters arising out of the unsettled state of affairs in the church. While they waited for the promised condescension of the episcopal divines, they received nothing but a paper expressive of bitter opposition to their proposals. They felt that they were treated unworthily, and therefore the brethren requested Baxter to answer it. He did so; but it was never used, as there seemed no probability of its having any good effect. In his life, however, we are furnished with both documents at large. [o]

A short time after this, the ministers were informed that the king would communicate his intentions in the form of a

[n] Life, part ii. p. 241. [o] Ibid. pp. 242—258.

declaration, to which they would be at liberty to furnish their exceptions. This was accordingly done on the 4th of September, 1660. This paper, which is very long, is full of pretensions to zeal for righteousness, peace, and union; unfair in its assumptions, and unkind in its insinuations; and expresses nothing explicitly but the determination of the court to uphold things as they were. It however intimated his majesty's approbation of the principles and conduct of the Presbyterian ministers who waited upon him at Breda; renews the declaration made there in favour of liberty of conscience; promises that none should be molested for differing from the forms of episcopacy; waives enforcing the sign of the cross at baptism, kneeling at the sacrament, the use of the surplice, the subscription of canonical obedience and re-ordination, where these were conscientiously objected to. It renews the promise to appoint a meeting to review the Liturgy; engages to make some alterations respecting the extent of some of the dioceses, if necessary, and to modify the authority of the bishops, if requisite; and that some other matters of reformation should be attended to.[p] As far as the feelings and wishes of the Presbyterian party on the great leading points of church government and discipline were concerned, it was *vox et preterea nihil.*[q]

"When we received this copy of the declaration," says Baxter, "we saw that it would not serve to heal our differences; we therefore told the Lord Chancellor, with whom we were to do all our business, that our endeavours, as to concord, would all be frustrated, if much were not altered in the declaration. I pass over all our conferences with him, both now and at other times. In conclusion, we were requested to draw up our thoughts of it in writing, which the brethren imposed on me to do. My judgment was, that all the fruit of this our treaty, beside a little reprival from intended ejection, would be but the satisfying our consciences and posterity that we had done our duty, and that it was not our fault that we came not to the desired concord or coalition; and therefore, seeing we had no considerable higher hopes, we should speak as plainly as honesty and conscience did require us. But when Mr. Calamy and Dr.

[p] This declaration was drawn up by Lord Clarendon; but the evasive claims which render it, in a great measure, nugatory, were inserted by the secret advisers of the king. Sheldon, Hinchman, and Morley, were deeply engaged in the whole affair.—*Secret History of Charles* II., vol. i. p. 93.

[q] Life, part ii. p. 259, 265.

Reynolds had read my paper, they were troubled at the plainness of it, and thought it never would be endured, and therefore desired some alteration; especially that I might leave out the prediction of the evils which would follow our non-agreement, which the court would interpret as a threatening: and the mentioning the aggravations of covenant-breaking and perjury. I gave them my reasons for letting it stand as it was. To bring me more effectually to their mind, they told the Earl of Manchester, with whom, as our sure friend, we still consulted, and through whom the court used to communicate to us what it desired. He called the Earl of Anglesey[r] and the Lord Hollis[s] to the consultations as our friends. And these three lords, with Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds, perused all the writing; and all, with earnestness, persuaded me to the said alterations. I confess, I thought those two points material which they excepted against, and would not have had them left out, and thereby made them think me too plain and unpleasing, as never used to the language or converse of a court. But it was not my unskilfulness in a more pleasing language, but my reason and conscience upon foresight of the issue which were the cause. When they told me, however, it would not so much as be re-

[r] The Earl of Anglesey was one of the most respectable of those noblemen who were understood to be attached to the Nonconformists. He was a native of Ireland, and son of Lord Mount Norris. He was at first supposed to favour the royal cause, but afterwards joined that of the parliament, and went to Ireland in its service. Though he had taken no part in the events which led immediately to the death of the king, his lordship did not increase his reputation by sitting as one of the commissioners on the trial of the regicides. He was made an earl for his important services in promoting the restoration, and rose to some of the highest offices in the state during the reign of Charles II. He was a man of very considerable learning, and indefatigable in business; but he seems to have been more attentive to his interests than to his consistency, or to what was due to the religious party by which he was held in estimation.—*Biog. Brit.* vol. i. pp. 192—200; *Athen. Ox.* vol. iv. pp. 181—186.

[s] Denzil, Lord Hollis, second son of the first Earl of Clare, was one of the most distinguished of the popular leaders in the reign of Charles I. He was courageous, patriotic, honourable, and disinterested in all his conduct. He appears to have taken a decided part against Charles I. (with whom he had lived upon terms of intimate friendship) purely from the love of his country. He was the principal leader of the Presbyterian party, which placed the greatest confidence in him; he was consequently disliked by Cromwell and the Independents, both of whom he opposed. Even Clarendon acknowledges that he deserved the high reputation which he enjoyed, "being of more accomplished parts than any of the Presbyterian leaders." It does not appear, however, that he espoused the Presbyterian interest so warmly after the restoration as he had done before.

ceived, and that I must go with it myself, for nobody else would, I yielded to the alterations." [t]

"A little before this petition was agreed on, the bishops' party appointed, at our request, a meeting with some of us, to try how near we could come, in preparation for what was to be resolved on. Dr. Morley, Dr. Hinchman, and Dr. Cosins, met Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself; and after a few roving discourses we parted, without bringing them to any particular concessions or abatement, only their general talk was, from the beginning, as if they would do any thing for peace which was fit to be done. They being then newly elected, but not consecrated to their several bishopricks, we called them, *My Lords*, which Dr. Morley once returned, saying, 'We may call you also, I suppose, by the same name.' By which I perceived they had some purpose to try that way with us." [u]

The petition, as altered, was finally agreed to. It expresses the disappointment which the ministers experienced, both from the contents and the omissions of the declaration; the pain which was caused by some of the insinuations contained in it; the distinction which they had always contended for between the episcopal form of church government, and the episcopacy established in England; and presents a very plain view of that modified system of government and discipline which would satisfy themselves, and, they believed, the great body of serious persons of their persuasion throughout the country. "But on being delivered to the Lord Chancellor, it was so ungrateful, that we were never called to present it to the king; but, instead of that, it was offered us, that we should make such alterations in the declaration as were necessary to attain its ends; with these cautions, that we put in nothing but what we judged of flat necessity; and that we alter not the preface or language of it: for it was to be the king's declaration, and what he spake as expressing his own sense was nothing to us. If we thought he imposed any thing intolerable upon us, we had leave to express our desires for the altering of it. Whereupon we agreed to offer another paper of alterations, letting all the rest of the declaration alone; but withal, by word, to tell those we offered it to, which was the Lord Chancellor, that this was not the model of church government which we at first offered, nor which we thought most expedient for the healing of the church;

[t] Life, part ii. p. 265. [u] Ibid. 274.

but seeing that cannot be obtained, we shall humbly submit, and thankfully acknowledge his majesty's condescension, if we may obtain what now we offer, and shall faithfully endeavour to improve it to the church's peace, to the utmost of our power."[x]

Another paper of alterations was accordingly made out and sent in. "After all this, a day was appointed for his majesty to peruse the declaration, as it was drawn up by the Lord Chancellor,[y] and to allow what he liked, and alter the rest, upon the hearing of what both sides should say. He accordingly came to the Lord Chancellor's house, and with him the Dukes of Albemarle and Ormond,[z] as I remember; the Earl of Manchester, the Earl of Anglesey, the Lord Hollis, &c.; and Dr. Sheldon, then bishop of London, Dr. Morley, then bishop of Worcester, Dr. Hinchman, then bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham, Dr. Gauden, afterwards bishop of Exeter and Worcester, Dr. Barwick, afterwards dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Hacket, bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, with divers others, among whom Dr. Gunning was most notable. On the other part stood Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Ash, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, Dr. Spurstow, myself, and who else I remember not. The business of the day was not to dispute, but as the Lord Chancellor read over the declaration, each party was to speak to what it disliked, and the king to determine how it should be, as he liked himself. While the Lord Chancellor read over the preface, there was no interruption, only he thought it best himself to blot out those words about the declaration in Scotland for the covenant,—

[x] Life, part ii. pp. 274—276.

[y] Hyde, earl of Clarendon, now lord chancellor, was in various respects a considerable man. He possessed a large portion of that kind of loyalty which made him regard the glory of his country chiefly as it contributed to the glory of the king. He was narrow-minded, and the subject of prejudices of the most violent kind, especially against the friends of liberty and the Nonconformists. It does not appear that his lordship particularly disliked Baxter; on the contrary, he seems to have done him, occasionally, some little kindness; but to Clarendon, and one or two of the bishops, a large portion of the sufferings and disappointment of the Nonconformists, after the Restoration, is mainly to be attributed. He could be merry with them, however, sometimes. He told Baxter, after the Savoy conference, that had he been but as fat as Dr. Manton, they had done very well. Baxter readily replied, that if his lordship would teach him the art of growing fat, he should find him quite ready to learn.—*Life*, part ii. p. 3.

[z] The Duke of Ormond was lord steward of the household, and was a man of great integrity and benevolence. He had always been a royalist, but was much respected by all parties. I am not aware that he took much part in the affairs which related to the Nonconformists.

that we did, from the moment it passed our hand, ask God forgiveness for our part in it. The great matter which we stopped at, was the word *consent*, where the bishop is to confirm by the consent of the pastor of that church; and the king would by no means pass the word consent, either there or in the point of ordination or censures, because it gave the ministers a negative voice. We urged him hard with a passage in his father's book of meditations, where he expressly granteth this *consent* of the presbyters;* but it would not prevail. The most that I insisted on was from the end of our endeavours, that we came not hither for a personal agreement only with our brethren of the other way, but to procure such gracious concessions from his majesty as would unite all the soberest people of the land; and we knew that on lower terms it could not be done. Though *consent* be but a little word, it was necessary to a very desirable end; if it were purposed that the parties and divisions should rather continue unhealed, then we had no more to say, there being no remedy: but we were sure that union would not be attained, if no consent were allowed ministers in any part of the government of their flocks; and so they would be only teachers, without any participation in the ruling of the people, whose rectors they were called. When I perceived some offence at what I said, I told them that we had not the judgments of men at our command. We could not, in reason, suppose that our concessions, or any thing we could do, would change the judgments of any great numbers; and therefore we must consider what will unite us, in case their judgments be not changed, else our labour would be to no purpose.

* The passage in the 'Eikon Basilike,' to which Baxter refers, as that in which Charles concedes that the bishops should rule with the consent of the presbyters, is, I apprehend, the following: "Not that I am against the managing of this precedency and authority in one man, by the *joint counsel and consent of many presbyters*: I have offered to restore that, as a fit means to avoid those errors, corruptions, and partialities, which are incident to any one man: also to avoid tyranny, which becomes no Christian, least of all churchmen. Besides, it will be a means to take away that burden and *odium* of affairs which may lie too heavy on one man's shoulders, as indeed I think it formerly did on the bishops' here." (Pp. 153, 154.) This was the opinion of Charles I. in solitude and suffering, and therefore no reason why it should bind Charles II., in full possession of royal power and authority. He, indeed, must have been amused at the quotation of his father's opinions from this book; and Dr. Gauden, the real author of the 'Eikon,' who was now present, must have been not a little mortified by the reference to such a passage. The king, it is said, when the reference was made, said quietly, "All that is in that book is not Gospel;" a remark which meant more than met the ear.—*Bate's Funeral Sermon for Baxter.*

"Bishop Morley told them how great our power was, and what we might do if we were willing. He told the king also that no man had written better of these matters than I had done; and there my five Disputations of Church Government lay, ready to be produced. All this was to intimate as if I now contradicted what I had there written. I told him that I had the best reason to know what I had written, and that I was still of the same mind. A great many words there were about prelacy and re-ordination; Dr. Gunning and Bishop Morley speaking almost all on one side, and Dr. Hinchman and Dr. Cosens sometimes; and Mr. Calamy and myself most on the other side; but I think neither party value the rambling discourses of that day so much as to think them worth recording. Mr. Calamy answered Dr. Gunning from Scripture very well, against the divine right of prelacy as a distinct order. When Dr. Gunning told them that Dr. Hammond had said enough against the Presbyterian cause and ordination, and was yet unanswered, I thought it meet to tell him, that I had answered the substance of his arguments, and said enough, moreover, against the diocesan frame of government; and to prove the validity of the English presbyters' ordination, which, indeed, was unanswered, though I was very desirous to have seen an answer to it. I said this, because they had got the book by them, and because I thought the unreasonableness of their dealing might be evinced, who force so many hundreds to be re-ordained; and will not any of them answer one book, which is written to prove the validity of that ordination which they would have nullified, though I provoked them purposely in such a presence.

"The most of the time being spent thus in speaking to particulars of the declaration, as it was read, when we came to the end, the Lord Chancellor drew out another paper, and told us that the king had been petitioned also by the Independents and Anabaptists; and though he knew not what to think of it himself, and did not very well like it, yet something he had drawn up which he would read to us, and desire us also to give our advice about it. Thereupon he read, as an addition to the declaration, 'that others also be permitted to meet for religious worship, so be it they do it not to the disturbance of the peace; and that no justice of peace or officer disturb them.' When he had read it, he again desired them all to think on it, and give their advice; but all were silent. The Presbyterians all perceived, as soon as they heard it, that it would secure the

liberty of the Papists; and Dr. Wallis whispered me in the ear, and entreated me to say nothing, for it was an odious business, but to let the bishops speak to it. But the bishops would not speak a word, nor any one of the Presbyterians, and so we were like to have ended in silence. I knew, if we consented to it, it would be charged on us, that we spake for a toleration of Papists and sectaries: yet it might have lengthened out our own. And if we spake against it, all sects and parties would be set against us as the causers of their sufferings, and as a partial people that would have liberty ourselves, but would have no others enjoy it with us. At last, seeing the silence continue, I thought our very silence would be charged on us as consent, if it went on, and therefore I only said this: 'That this reverend brother, Dr. Gunning, even now speaking against the sects, had named the Papists and the Socinians: for our parts, we desired not favour to ourselves alone, and rigorous severity we desired against none. As we humbly thanked his majesty for his indulgence to ourselves, so we distinguished the tolerable parties from the intolerable. For the former, we humbly craved just lenity and favour, but for the latter, such as the two sorts named before by that reverend brother, for our parts, we could not make their toleration our request.'[b] To which his majesty said, there were laws enough against the Papists; to which I replied, that we understood the question to be, whether those laws should be executed on them or not. And so his majesty broke up the meeting of that day.

"Before the meeting was dissolved, his majesty had all along told what he would have stand in the declaration; and he named four divines, to determine of any words in the alteration, if there were any difference; that is, Bishop Morley, Bishop Hinchman, Dr. Reynolds, and Mr. Calamy; and if they disagreed, that the Earl of Anglesey and the Lord Hollis should decide it. As they went out of the room, I told the Earl of Anglesey, that we had no other business there but the church's peace and welfare, and I would not have been the man that should have done so much against it as he had done that day, for far

[b] Baxter's honesty is always evident in every thing he did; but here his prejudices and imperfect views of religious liberty made him appear in a very disadvantageous light. There is no doubt that the conduct of the court on this occasion was designed to entrap the Nonconformists. If they said yea to the proposition, they would be regarded as the friends of Popery; if they said nay, they would be considered enemies to the liberties of others, while they were struggling for their own.

more than he was like to get by it. Though called a Presbyterian, he had spoken more for prelacy than we expected; and I think by the consequent that this saying did some good; for when I afterwards found the declaration amended, and asked how it came to pass, he intimated to me that it was his doing.

"When I went out from the meeting, I went dejected, being fully satisfied that the form of government in that declaration would not be satisfactory, nor attain that concord which was our end, because the pastors had no government of the flocks; and I was resolved to meddle no more in the business, but patiently suffer with other dissenters. But two or three days after, meeting the king's declaration cried about the streets, I presently stepped into a house to read it; and seeing the word *consent* put in about confirmation and sacrament, though not as to jurisdiction, and seeing the *pastoral persuasive power* of governing left to all the ministers with the rural dean, and some more amendments, I wondered how it came to pass, but was exceeding glad of it; perceiving that now the terms were, though not such as we desired, such as any sober, honest minister might submit to. I presently resolved to do my best to persuade all, according to my interest and opportunity, to conform according to the terms of this declaration, and cheerfully to promote the concord of the church, and brotherly love, which this concord doth bespeak.

"Having frequent business with the Lord Chancellor about other matters, I was going to him when I met the king's declaration in the street; and I was so much pleased with it, that having told him why I was so earnest to have had it suited to the desired end, I gave him hearty thanks for the addition, and told him that if the liturgy were but altered as the declaration promised, and this settled and continued to us by law, and not reversed, I should take it to be my duty to do my best to procure the full consent of others, and promote our happy concord on these terms; and should rejoice to see the day when factions and parties may all be swallowed up in unity, and contentions turned to brotherly love. At that time he began to offer me a bishoprick, of which more anon."[c]

The account which Clarendon gives us of the transactions relating to the declaration, are very different from Baxter's; and as he refers to the conduct of the ministers on this occasion for

[c] Life, part ii. pp. 276, 279.

proof of the necessity of a rigorous enforcement of the laws, I shall give his version of it in his own words. This I should not have thought necessary, had not Bishop Heber, in his Life of Jeremy Taylor, introduced it as a proof of the "disingenuousness of some of the Presbyterian leaders, and the absurd bigotry of others."[d]

"Here," says Clarendon, "I cannot but instance two acts of the Presbyterians, by which, if their humour and spirit were not enough discovered and known, their want of ingenuity and integrity would be manifest; and how impossible it is for men who would not be deceived, to depend on either. When the declaration had been delivered to the ministers, there was a clause in it, in which the king declared 'his own constant practice of the common prayer,' and that he would take it well from those who used it in their churches, that the common people might be again acquainted with the piety, gravity, and devotion of it, and which he thought would facilitate their living in good neighbourhood together, or words to that effect. When they had considered the whole some days, Mr. Calamy, and some other ministers deputed by the rest, came to the Chancellor to re-deliver it into his hands. They acknowledged the king had been very gracious to them in his concessions; though he had not granted all that some of their brethren wished, yet they were contented, only desiring him that he would prevail with the king, that the clause mentioned before might be left out, which, they protested, was moved by them for the king's own end, and that they might show their obedience to him, and resolution to do him service. For they were resolved themselves to do what the king wished; first to reconcile the people, who for near twenty years had not been acquainted with that form, by informing them that it contained much piety and devotion, and might be lawfully used; and then that they would begin to use it themselves, and by degrees accustom the people to it, which they said would have a better effect than if the clause were in the declaration. For they should be thought in their persuasions to comply only with the king's declaration, and to merit from his majesty, and not to be moved from the conscience of the duty, and so they should take that occasion to manifest their zeal to please the king. And they feared there would be other ill consequences from it by the waywardness of

[d] Heber's Life of Taylor, pp. 101, 341.

the common people, who were to be treated with skill, and would not be prevailed upon all at once. The king was to be present the next morning, to hear the declaration read the last time before both parties, and then the Chancellor told him, in the presence of all the rest, what the ministers had desired, which they again enlarged upon, with the same protestations of their resolutions, in such a manner that his majesty believed they meant honestly, and the clause was left out. But the declaration was no sooner published, than, observing that the people were generally satisfied with it, they sent their emissaries abroad, and many of their letters were intercepted, and particularly a letter from Mr. Calamy, to a leading minister in Somersetshire, whereby he advised and intreated him that he and his friends would continue and persist in the use of *the Directory*, and by no means admit the Common Prayer in their churches; for thus he made no question but that they should prevail further with the king than he had yet consented to in his declaration!

"The other instance was, that as soon as the declaration was printed, the king received a petition in the name of the ministers of London, and many others of the same opinion with them, who had subscribed that petition, amongst whom none of those who had attended the king in those conferences had their names. They gave his majesty humble thanks for the grace he had vouchsafed to show in his declaration, which they received as an earnest of his future goodness and condescension, in granting all those other concessions, which were absolutely necessary for the liberty of their conscience, and desired, with importunity and ill manners, that the wearing the surplice, and the using the cross in baptism, might be absolutely abolished out of the church, as being scandalous to all men of tender consciences! From these two instances, all men may conclude that nothing but a severe execution of the law can prevail upon that class of men to conform to government."*

On this account of Clarendon's much might be said to show its inaccuracy and unfairness. It might be inferred from what he says, that the only matter of difference about the declaration, respected the king's use of the Liturgy in his private chapel, and his wish that those who used it might recommend it to others. Whereas I cannot perceive that the ministers

* Life of Lord Clarendon, pp. 75, 76.

objected to this at all, or preferred any request that the clause on this subject should be omitted. Baxter, it is certain, could have been no party to such a demand. The petition drawn up by him for his brethren, at first sight of the declaration, but which was not adopted, contains no reference to any such thing; which it must have done had it been insisted on, as Clarendon asserts. And in fact the declaration, as published, contains the king's request that the ministers would recommend the Prayer-book.

Instead of their being dissatisfied with the king's declaration, as altered in conformity with some of their wishes; it is apparent from Baxter's narrative, how much he and most of his brethren rejoiced in it, and that they considered little more necessary for their satisfaction than the fulfilment of the promises contained in it, and passing it into a law.

The duplicity charged on Calamy is founded on the evidence of letters pretended to be intercepted; the most convenient sort of proof for a prime minister, but the most villanous of all kinds of evidence. The conduct charged is not consistent with the general character of Calamy, with the motives by which it is conceivable he should have been actuated at the time; or with the fact, that subsequent to this discovery of his treachery, a bishoprick was urged upon him, by Clarendon himself.

The reason why the thanks presented by the London ministers for his majesty's declaration, (which abounds with expressions of loyalty and gratitude for his gracious concessions,) were not subscribed by those who had waited upon the king, was not, as Clarendon insinuates, disaffection to him, and disappointment that the declaration was generally acceptable. The ministers of London, it appears, differed among themselves as to the propriety of thanking his majesty for the declaration, on the ground that it implied their approbation of bishops and archbishops, &c.; and old Arthur Jackson, who had presented the Bible to Charles on his entry into London, decidedly opposed their doing so, contrary to the wishes of Baxter and others.

As conclusive evidence how little the authority of Clarendon is worth in this affair, the importunity and ill manners of which he accuses the ministers has no foundation in fact, for the language which he ascribes to them does not occur in the paper to which he refers. He grossly misrepresents the petition which they presented.[f]

[f] See Baxter's Life, part ii. pp. 284, 285, where the petition is given at large.

This attempt of Clarendon to throw the blame of the treatment which the Nonconformists experienced upon their unreasonableness and duplicity, is the pitiful shift of a man who must have been haunted by a consciousness of the undeserved injuries which he had been the chief means of inflicting upon others; and who makes an impotent attempt to get rid of the guilt and the odium which attach to his conduct. It is more surprising, however, that such a man as Heber could allege, that the only differences between the parties respected "the form and colour of an ecclesiastical garment, the wording of a prayer, or the injunction of kneeling at the sacrament."[s] He does not, indeed, justify the conduct of the ruling powers; but he entirely forgets, that the question at issue really was, whether conscience, be it well or ill informed, must submit to the authority of men, or be subject to the authority of God only. The Nonconformists believed certain things to be unlawful in the worship of God; the leaders of the church said, "We admit that they are not of divine authority, but they are enacted by us, we believe them to be good, you must therefore submit to them, or be thrown out." Holding the views which the Nonconformists did, they must have ceased to be Christians, had they not chosen to obey God rather than men. For this conduct, instead of being reproached as narrow-minded and bigoted sectarians who involved the nation in blood and mischief for trifles, they deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance, as sufferers for pure and undefiled religion.

The gratification of Baxter, from the apparent adoption in the declaration of some of the phrases contended for by the ministers, was not destined to be of long continuance. Nothing more was intended by the court than the amusement of the parties, till every thing was sufficiently ripe for the accomplishment of its real intentions. To carry on the same scheme of political deception, it was thought desirable to make some of the leading ministers bishops. Not that they wanted such bishops; but because it was the most effectual method of silencing such men, and destroying their influence with their own party. It succeeded with some, but not with Baxter. He gives the following account of the offers which were made to himself, and of the grounds on which he rejected them.

"A little before the meeting about the king's declaration, Colonel Birch came to me, as from the Lord Chancellor, to per-

[s] Heber's Life of Taylor, p. 100.

suade me to take the bishoprick of Hereford, for he had bought the bishop's house at Whitburne, and thought to make a better bargain with me than with another, and, therefore, finding that the lord chancellor intended me the offer of one, he desired it might be that I thought it best to give them no positive denial till I saw the utmost of their intents: and I perceived that Colonel Birch came privately, that a bishoprick might not be publicly refused, and to try whether I would accept it, that else it might not be offered me; for he told me that they would not bear such a repulse. I told him that I was resolved never to be bishop of Hereford, and that I did not think I should ever see cause to take any bishoprick; but I could give no positive answer till I saw the king's resolutions about the way of church government: for if the old diocesan frame continued, he knew we could never accept or own it. After this, not having a flat denial, he came again and again to Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself together, to importune us all to accept the offer, for the bishoprick of Norwich was offered to Dr. Reynolds, and Coventry and Litchfield to Mr. Calamy; but he had no positive answer, but the same from me as before. At last, the day that the king's declaration came out, when I was with the lord chancellor, who did all, he asked me whether I would accept of a bishoprick; I told him that if he had asked me that question the day before, I could easily have answered him that in conscience I could not do it; for though I could live peaceably under whatever government the king should set up, I could not have a hand in executing it. But having, as I was coming to him, seen the king's declaration, and seeing that by it the government is so far altered as it is, I took myself for the church's sake exceedingly beholden to his lordship for those moderations; and my desire to promote the happiness of the church, which that moderation tendeth to, did make me resolve to take that course which tendeth most thereto. Whether to take a bishoprick be the way, I was in doubt, and desired some further time for consideration. But if his lordship would procure us the settlement of the matter of that declaration, by passing it into a law, I promised him to take that way in which I might most serve the public peace.

"Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself, had some speeches together about it; and we all thought that a bishoprick might be accepted according to the description of the declaration, without

any violation of the covenant, or owning the ancient prelacy :[h] but all the doubt was whether this declaration would be made a law as was then expected, or whether it were but a temporary means to draw us on till we came up to all the diocesans desired. Mr. Calamy desired that we might all go together, and all refuse or all accept it.

"By this time the rumour of it fled abroad, and the voice of the city made a difference. For though they wished that none of us should be bishops, the said Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Baxter, being known to be for moderate episcopacy, their acceptance would be less scandalous; but if Mr. Calamy should accept it, who had preached, and written, and done so much against it (which were then at large recited), never Presbyterian would be trusted for his sake. So that the clamour was very loud against his acceptance of it: and Mr. Matthew Newcomen, his brother-in-law, and many more, wrote to me earnestly to dissuade him.

"For my own part, I resolved against it at the first, but not as a thing which I judged unlawful in itself as described in the king's declaration: but I knew that it would take me off my writing. I looked to have most of the godly ministers cast out; and what good could be done by ignorant, vile, incapable men? I feared that this declaration was but for present use, and that shortly it would be revoked or nullified; and if so, I doubted not but the laws would prescribe such work for bishops, in silencing ministers, and troubling honest Christians for their conscience, and ruling the vicious with greater lenity, as that I had rather have the meanest employment among men. My judgment was also fully resolved against the lawfulness of the old diocesan frame.

"But when Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy asked my thoughts, I told them that, distinguishing between what is simply, and what is by accident, evil, I thought that as episcopacy is described in the king's declaration, it is lawful when better cannot be had; but yet scandal might make it unfit for some men more than others. To Mr. Calamy therefore I would give no counsel, but for Dr. Reynolds, I persuaded him to accept it, so be it he would publicly declare that he took it on the terms of the king's declaration, and would lay it down when he could no

[h] It requires a considerable portion of the distinguishing powers of Baxter to understand how the acceptance of a bishoprick, on any such footing as it was likely to be placed, was consistent with the principles of the covenant.

longer exercise it on those terms. Only I left it to his consideration whether it would be better to stay till he saw what they would do with the declaration; and for myself, I was confident I should see cause to refuse it.

"When I came to the lord chancellor the next day save one, he asked me of my resolution, and put me to it so suddenly, that I was forced to delay no longer, but told him that I could not accept it for several reasons. And it was not the least that I thought I could better serve the church without it, if he would but prosecute the establishment of the terms granted; and because I thought it would be ill taken if I refused it upon any but acceptable reasons. But as writing would serve best against misreports hereafter, I the next day put a letter into the lord chancellor's hand, which he took in good part; in which I concealed most of my reasons, but gave the best, and used more freedom in my further requests than I expected should have any good success."[1]

As this letter contains some of Baxter's views of the state of things which then existed, and suggests to the lord chancellor measures which, if adopted, he supposed would both advance the interests of the church, and gratify the Nonconformists, I shall present it entire. Whether he had any reasons for believing that the persons whom he mentions would accept of bishoprics, cannot now be ascertained. It has rarely happened that such a situation has been so completely in the power of an individual to accept, whose principles did not stand in the way of his acceding to it, but who honourably declined it for himself, and so ingenuously recommended others.

"My Lord,

"Your great favour and condescension encourage me to give you more of my sense of the business which your lordship was pleased to propound. I was, till I saw the declaration, much dejected, and resolved against a bishoprick as unlawful; but, finding there more than on October 22d., that his majesty grants us the pastor's consent, that the rural dean with the whole ministry may exercise as much persuasive pastoral power as I could desire, and that subscription is abated in the universities, &c. Finding such happy concessions in the great point of parochial power and discipline, and in the liturgy and ceremonies, my soul rejoiced in thankfulness to God and his instruments, and my conscience presently told me it was my

[1] Life, part ii. pp. 281, 282.

duty to do my best with myself and others, as far as I had interest and opportunity, to suppress all sinful discontents; and having competent materials now put into my hands, without which I could have done nothing, to persuade all my brethren to thankfulness and obedient submission to the government. Being raised to some joyful hopes of seeing the beginning of a happy union, I shall crave your lordship's pardon for presuming what further endeavours will be necessary to accomplish it. 1. If your lordship will endeavour to get the declaration passed into an act. 2. If you will speedily procure a commission to the persons that are equally to be deputed to that work, to review the Common Prayer-book, according to the declaration. 3. If you will further effectually the restoration of able, faithful ministers, who are lately removed, who have, and will have, great interest in the sober part of the people, to a settled station of service in the church. 4. If you will open some way for the ejection of the insufficient, scandalous, and unable. 5. If you will put as many of our persuasion as you can into bishopricks, if it may be, more than three. 6. If you will desire the bishops to place some of them in inferior places of trust, especially rural deaneries, which is a station suitable to us, in that it hath no salary or maintenance, nor coercive power, but that simple, pastoral, persuasive power which we desire. This much will set us all in joint.

"And, for my own part, I hope, by letters this very week, to disperse the seeds of satisfaction into many counties of England.[k] My conscience commanding me to make this my very work and business, unless the things granted should be reversed, which God forbid. I must profess to your lordship that I am utterly against accepting of a bishoprick, because I am conscious that it will overmatch my sufficiency, and affright me with the thought of my account for so great an undertaking. Especially, because it will very much disable me from an effectual promoting of the church's peace. As men will question all my argumentations and persuasions, when they see me in the dignity which I plead for, but will take me to speak my conscience impartially, when I am but as one of themselves; so I must profess to your lordship that it will stop my own mouth that I cannot for shame speak half so freely as now I can and will, if God enable me, for obe-

[k] How different is this from Clarendon's representation of the behaviour of the ministers in London towards their brethren in the country!

dience and peace; while I know that the hearers will be thinking I am pleading for myself. I therefore humbly crave

"That your lordship will put some able man of our persuasion into the place which you intend for me, though I now think that Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy may better accept of a bishoprick than I, which I hope your lordship will promote. I shall presume to offer some choice to your consideration: Dr. Francis Roberts, of Wrington, in Somersetshire, known by his works; Mr. Froyzall, of Clun, in Shropshire and Hereford diocese, a man of great worth and good interest; Mr. Daniel Cawdrey,[1] of Billing, in Northamptonshire; Mr. Anthony Burgess, of Sutton Coldfield, in Warwickshire—all known by their printed works; Mr. John Trap, of Gloucestershire; Mr. Ford, of Exeter; Mr. Hughes, of Plymouth; Mr. Bampfield, of Sherborne; Mr. Woodbridge, of Newbury; Dr. Chambers, Dr. Bryan, and Dr. Grew, all of Coventry; Mr. Brinsley, of Yarmouth; Mr. Porter, of Whitchurch in Shropshire; Mr. Gilpin, of Cumberland; Mr. Bowles, of York; Dr. Temple, of Brampton, in Warwickshire: I need name no more.

"Secondly: That you will believe I as thankfully acknowledge your lordship's favour as if I were by it possessed of a bishoprick: and if your lordship continue in those intentions, I shall thankfully accept it in any other state or relation that may further my service to the church and to his majesty. But I desire, for the fore-mentioned reasons, that it may be no cathedral relation. And whereas the vicar of the parish where I have lived will not resign, but accept me only as his curate, if your lordship would procure him some prebendary, or other place of competent profit, for I dare not mention him to any pastoral charge, or place that requireth preaching, that so he might resign that vicarage to me, without his loss, according to the late act before December; for the sake of that town of Kidderminster, I should take it as a very great favour. But if there be any great inconvenience or difficulties in the way, I can well be content to be his curate. I crave your lordship's pardon for this trouble, which your own condescension has drawn upon you, and remain," &c.[m]

This letter, which is dated the 1st of November 1660, states clearly Baxter's approbation of the king's declaration, and his

[1] It is singular that Baxter should have proposed Cawdrey for a bishoprick. He was one of the most decided, indeed violent, Presbyterians of the times.

[m] Life, part ii. pp. 283, 284.

anxious desire that it might be put on the footing of law, and fairly and fully acted upon. The requests which the letter makes, were not unreasonable in themselves, or in reference to the state of parties at the time, though not likely to be all complied with. The letter as a whole, is an admirable specimen of the simplicity, integrity, and disinterestedness of Baxter.

"Mr. Calamy," he says, "blamed me for giving in my denial alone, before we had resolved together what to do. But I told him the truth, that being upon other necessary business with the lord chancellor, he put me to it on the sudden, so that I could not conveniently delay my answer.

"Dr. Reynolds almost as suddenly accepted, saying, that some friend had taken out the congé d'elire for him without his knowledge. He read to me a profession directed to the king, which he had written, where he professed that he took a bishop and a presbyter to differ not *ordine* but *gradu;* that a bishop was but the chief presbyter, and that he was not to ordain or govern but with his presbyters' assistance and consent; that he accepted of the place as described in the king's declaration, and not as it stood before in England; and that he would no longer hold or exercise it than he could do it on these terms. To this sense it was, and he told me that he would offer it the king when he accepted of the place; but whether he did or not I cannot tell. He died in the bishoprick of Norwich, an. 1676.[n]

"Mr. Calamy long suspended his answer, so that that bishoprick was long undisposed of; till he saw the issue of all of our treaty, which easily resolved him.[o] Dr. Manton was offered the deanery of Rochester, and Dr. Bates, the deanery of Coventry

[n] Dr. Reynolds was a person of good learning, respectable talents, and decided piety. It appears that Baxter thought he might, consistently with his principles, accept a bishoprick. Reynolds does not appear to have believed in the *jus divinum* of any form of church government, and therefore he could have no conscientious objections to a bishoprick, and probably thought he might be able to serve the Nonconformists more in that capacity, than had he remained one of themselves. He appears to have managed the see of Norwich with great moderation, though, even there, much suffering was endured; many of the Nonconformists being prosecuted by the bishop's chancellor, though, it is said, greatly against the bishop's will. See Chalmers' 'Life of Reynolds,' prefixed to his works, and the 'Conformist's Plea for the Nonconformist,' part iv. p. 67.

[o] It would have been honourable to the character of Dr. Calamy had he refused the bishoprick in a more prompt and decided manner. It is evident that he cast a longing, lingering look towards it, and said *nolo episcopari* with some reluctance. Nothing seems to have prevented his acceptance but the

and Litchfield, which they both after some time refused. And, as I heard, Mr. Edward Bowles was offered the deanery of York, at least, which he refused."

Thus ended the affair of the Presbyterian bishopricks, which did the rejecters more honour than the accepter. Calamy seems to have hesitated; perplexed, it would appear, by opposite views of duty, but little wishing to decline, provided he could have complied without compromising his character and consistency. Baxter's promptitude and decision reflect the greatest credit on his disinterested and upright character. The king's declaration was issued; and the London ministers, glad to receive any thing which seemed to promise protection and encouragement to their labours, met and thanked his majesty for his moderation and goodness, and entreated him still to attend to their requests. It was presented on the 16th of November, 1660, by a number of the ministers, not including Baxter.

"Whether this came to the king's ears, he says (or what else it was that caused it I know not, but presently after the Earl of Lauderdale came to tell me), that I must come the next day to the king, who was pleased to tell me that he sent for me only to signify his favour to me. I told him I feared my plain speeches, October 22d, which I thought the case in hand commanded me to employ, might have been displeasing to him; but he told me that he was not offended at the plainness, freedom, or earnestness of them, but only when he thought I was not in the right; and that for my free speech he took me to be the honester man. I suppose this favour came from the bishops, who having notice of what last passed, did think that now I might serve their interests." [p]

In his majesty's declaration it was intimated that the liturgy should be reviewed and reformed, and certain alterations adopted, to meet the feelings of the Nonconformists. Baxter frequently importuned the chancellor to carry this engagement into effect. At last Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy were authorised to name the persons on their side to manage the conference; and that

outcry which it would have raised against his consistency, and the remonstrances of his friends. This fact throws a greater shade over his character for decision than any thing else that I know. He possessed highly respectable talents, was the leader of the ministers of London for many years; and must have been a very moderate Presbyterian when he could deliberate so long whether to accept or to reject the proferred bishoprick. Even Baxter seems to think, however, he might have acceded consistently with his sentiments.

[p] Life, part ii. p. 264.

being done, a commission under the great seal was issued empowering the persons nominated on both sides to meet for this purpose. The individuals chosen, comprehended the archbishop of York with twelve bishops on the one side, and eleven Nonconformist ministers on the other; with a provision of other individuals, to supply the places of any who might not be able to attend.

"A meeting was accordingly appointed, and the Savoy, the bishop of London's lodgings, named by them for the place. There met us, Dr. Frewen, archbishop of York; Dr. Sheldon, bishop of London; Dr. Morley, bishop of Worcester; Dr. Saunderson, bishop of Lincoln; Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham; Dr. Hinchman, bishop of Salisbury; Dr. Walton, bishop of Chester; Dr. Lany, bishop of Peterborough; Dr. King, bishop of Rochester; Dr. Stern, bishop of Carlisle; and the constantest man in attendance of them all, Dr. Gauden, bishop of Exeter. On the other side there met, Dr. Reynolds, bishop of Norwich; Mr. Clark, Dr. Spurstow, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Rawlinson, Mr. Case, and myself. The commission being read, the archbishop of York, a peaceable man, spake first, and told us that he knew nothing of the business, but perhaps the bishop of London knew more of the king's mind in it, and therefore was fitter to speak on it than he. The bishop of London told us, that it was not they, but we that had been the seekers of this conference, and who desired alterations in the liturgy; and therefore they had nothing to say or do, till we brought in all that we had to say against it in writing, and all the additional forms and alterations which we desired. Our brethren were very much against this motion, and urged the king's commission, which required us to meet together, advise, and consult. They told him that by conference we might perceive, as we went on, what each would yield to, and might more speedily dispatch, and probably obtain, our end; whereas, writing would be a tedious, endless business, and we should not have that familiarity and acquaintance with each other's minds, which might facilitate our concord. But the bishop of London resolutely insisted on not doing any thing till we brought in all our exceptions, alterations, and additions, at once. In this I confess, above all things else, I was wholly of his mind, and prevailed with my brethren to consent; but, I conjecture, for contrary reasons. For, I suppose, he thought that we should either be altogether by the ears, and be of several

minds among ourselves, at least in our new forms; or that when our proposals and forms came to be scanned by them, they should find as much matter of exception against ours as we did against theirs; or that the people of our persuasion would be dissatisfied or divided about it. And indeed our brethren themselves, thought either all, or much of this would come to pass, and our disadvantage would be exceedingly great. But I told them the reasons of my opinion; that we should quickly agree on our exceptions, and that we should offer none but what we were agreed on among ourselves. I reminded them, that we were engaged to offer new forms, which was the expedient that from the beginning I had aimed at and brought in, as the only way of accommodation, considering that they should be in Scripture words, and that ministers should choose which forms they would. I stated, that verbal disputes would be managed with much more contention; but, above all, that in no other way could our cause be well understood by our people, or foreigners, or posterity; but our conference and cause would be misreported, and published, as the conference at Hampton Court was, to our prejudice, while none durst contradict it. On this plan what we said for our cause, would come fully and truly to the knowledge of England, and of other nations; and that if we refused this opportunity of leaving upon record our testimony against corruptions, for a just and moderate reformation, we might never have the like again. So for these reasons, I told the bishops that we accepted of the task which they imposed on us; yet so as to bring all our exceptions at one time, and all our additions at another time, which they granted."[q]

There is doubtless considerable force in these reasons of Baxter's for managing the conference in writing rather than by personal discussion. But it is also evident that the Presbyterians were completely taken in the trap prepared for them. The other party were thus left to assume that right was on their side; the onus of objecting in every case was thrown on the Nonconformists, and the less difficult part of defending long-established usages left to the bishops. As they required to be furnished at once with every thing objected to and required, the probability was, either that the Nonconformists would disagree among themselves, some perhaps going too far, and others stopping short, and thus a satisfactory reason

[q] Life, part ii. pp. 305, 306.

for refusing compliance would be furnished. Or, presenting a considerable mass of objection and alteration at once, a sufficient pretence would be afforded for holding them up as unreasonable and captious, and determined to be satisfied with nothing less than an entire revolution of the church. The last probable result was that which took place, and due use was made of it accordingly.

The Nonconformists, after withdrawing from this conference, in which they had only a choice of difficulties to encounter, agreed to divide among themselves the task devolved on them. The selection of exceptions to the Common Prayer-book they distributed among them, and the additions, or new forms, they devolved on Baxter alone. He immediately set himself to the task, and completed, in a fortnight, an entire liturgy; correcting the disorderly arrangement, removing the repetitions, and supplying the defects of the Prayer-book; which he considered its principal faults. He found, at the end of the fortnight, that his brethren had not completed their part of the business; so, to assist them, he also drew up a paper containing the exceptions which occurred to him. This paper and his liturgy were both afterwards printed by himself.[r] The exceptions and alterations, as presented, are also printed in his life.[s] Few persons who consider these exceptions, with the proposed amendments, if any tolerable degree of candour be exercised, will be ready to maintain that the former were uncalled for, or that the latter would not be improvements. But where undistinguishing admiration is directed to works of merely human composition, it cannot be expected that any alterations will be regarded, except in the light of captious and unnecessary innovations.

"When the exceptions against the liturgy were finished, the brethren oft read over the reformed liturgy which I offered them. At first they would have had no rubric or directory, but bare prayers, because they thought our commission allowed it not; at last however they yielded to the reasons which I gave them, and resolved to take them in; but first to offer the bishops their exceptions.

"At this time the convocation was chosen; for till now it was deferred. Had it been called when the king came in, the inferior clergy would have been against the diocesan and imposing way: but afterwards many hundreds were turned out, that all

[r] Life, part ii. p. 308. [s] Ibid. 316.

the old sequestered ministers might come in. And the opinion of re-ordination being set afoot, all those ministers that, for twenty years together, while bishops were laid aside, had been ordained without diocesans, were, in many counties, denied any voices in the election of clerks for the convocation. By all which means, and by the scruples of abundance of ministers, who thought it unlawful to have any thing to do in the choosing of such a kind of assembly, the diocesan party wholly carried it in the choice.

"In London the election was appointed to be in Christ's Church, on the second day of May, 1661. The London ministers that were not ejected, proved the majority against the diocesan party; and when I went to have joined with them, they sent to me not to come, as they did also to Mr. Calamy; so, without my knowledge, they chose Mr. Calamy and me for London. But they carried it against the other party but by three voices: and the bishop of London having the power of choosing two out of four, or four out of six, that are chosen by the ministers in a certain circuit, did give us the great benefit of being both left out. So we were excused, and the city of London had no clerk in the convocation.[t] How should I have been then baited, and what a vexatious place should I have had in such a convocation!

"On the fourth day of May, we had a meeting with the bishops, where we gave in our paper of exceptions to them, which they received. The seventh was a meeting at Sion College, of all the London ministers, for the choice of a president and assistants for the next year; where some of the Presbyterians, upon a petty scruple, absenting themselves, the diocesan party carried it, and so got the possession and rule of the college. The eighth, the new parliament and convocation sat down, being constituted of those fitted and devoted to the diocesan interest. On the two-and-twentieth of the month, by order of parliament, the national vow and covenant was burnt in the street, by the hands of the common hangman.

"When the brethren came to examine the reformed liturgy, and had frequently read it over, they passed it at last in the same words that I had written it, save only that they put out a few lines in the administration of the Lord's Supper, where the

[t] This is only one of many proofs of the enmity of Sheldon to the whole Nonconformist party, and of his determination to thwart them every way in his power. Rather than have Calamy and Baxter, he deprived London of its proper representatives in the convocation.

word "offering" was used; and they put out a page of reasons for infant baptism, which I had annexed to that office, thinking it unnecessary. They also put the larger litany into an appendix, as thinking it too long; and Dr. Wallis was desired to draw up the prayer for the king, which is his work, being afterwards somewhat altered by us. We agreed to put before it a short address to the bishops, professing our readiness in debate to yield to the shortening of any thing which should be too long, and to the altering of any thing that should be found amiss.

"As I foresaw what was likely to be the end of our conference, I desired the brethren that we might draw up a plain and earnest petition to the bishops, to yield to such terms of peace and concord as they themselves did confess to be lawful to be yielded to: for though we were equals in the king's commission, yet we are commanded by the Holy Ghost, if it be possible, and as much as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men. If we were denied, it would satisfy our consciences, and justify us before all the world, much more than if we only disputed for it. However, we might this way have an opportunity to produce our reasons for peace, which else we were not likely to have.

"This motion was accepted, and I was desired to draw up the petition, which I did, and being examined, was, with a word or two of alteration, consented to. When we met with the bishops, to deliver in these papers, I was required to deliver them: and, if it were possible, to get audience for the petition before all the company. I told them, that though we were equals in the present work, and our appointed business was to treat, yet we were conscious of our place and duty, and had drawn up a petition to them, which, though somewhat long, I humbly craved their consent that I might read. Some were against it, and so they would have been generally if they had known what was in it; but at last they yielded to it; but their patience was never so put to it by us as in hearing so long and ungrateful a petition. When I had read it, Dr. Gunning began a long and vehement speech against it: to which, when he came to the end, I replied; but I was interrupted in the midst of my reply, and was fain to bear it, because they had been patient with so much ado so long before. I delivered them the petition when I had read it, and with it, a fair copy of our reformed liturgy, called additional forms and alterations of theirs. They received both, and so we departed."[u]

[u] Life, part ii. pp. 333, 334.

That there was no disposition on the part of the bishops to yield any thing, is very evident from the whole of their conduct. The commission only extended for three months, a considerable part of which had already expired, either in debating how the business should be managed, or in preparing papers, instead of conferring together in an amicable manner. What follows in Baxter's account of the affair, will show that agreement had neither been contemplated nor intended, from the beginning.

"After all this, when the bishops were to have sent us two papers, one of their concessions, how much they would alter of the liturgy as excepted against, and the other of their acceptance of our offered forms or reasons against them; instead of both these, a good while after, they sent us such a paper as they did before, of their reasonings against all our exceptions, without any abatements or alterations at all that are worth the naming. Our brethren, seeing what they were resolved to bring it to, and how unpeaceably they managed the business, did think best to write them a plain answer to their paper, and not to suppress it, as we had done by the first. This task also they imposed on me. I went out of town, to Dr. Spurstow's house, in Hackney, for retirement; where, in eight days' time, I drew up a reply to their answer to our exceptions. This the brethren read and consented to, only wishing that it had been larger in the latter end, where I had purposely been brief, because I had been too large in the beginning; and because *particulars* may be answered satisfactorily in a few words when the general differences are fully cleared.

"By this time, our commission was almost expired; and therefore our brethren were earnestly desirous of personal debates with them upon the papers put in, to try how much alteration they would yield to. We therefore sent to the bishops to desire it of them; and, at last, they yielded to it, when we had but ten days more to treat.

"When we met them, I delivered the answer to their former papers, the largeness of which I saw displeased them; but they received it. We earnestly pressed them to spend the little time remaining in such pacifying conference as tended to the ends which are mentioned in the king's declaration and commission; and told them, that such disputes which they had called us to by their manner of writing, were not the things which we desired, or thought most conducing to those ends.

"I have reason to think that the generality of the bishops

and doctors present, never knew what we offered them in the reformed liturgy, nor in this reply, nor in any of our papers, save those few which we read openly to them; for they were put up, and carried away; and, I conjecture, scarce any but the writers of their confutations would be at the labour of reading them over. I remember, in the midst of our last disputation, when I drew out the short preface to the last reply, which Mr. Calamy wrote, to enumerate, in the beginning, before their eyes, many of the grossest corruptions, which they stiffly defended, and refused to reform, the company were more ashamed and silent than at any thing else that I had said. By which I perceived that they had never read or heard that very preface which was an epistle to themselves: yea, the chief of them confessed, when they bade me read it, that they knew no such thing. So that, it seems, before they knew what was in them, they resolved to reject our papers, right or wrong, and to deliver them up to their contradictors.

"When we came to our debates, I first craved of them their animadversions on our additions and alterations of the liturgy, which we had put in long before; and that they would tell us what they allowed or disallowed in them, that we might have the use of them, according to the words in the king's declaration and commission. But they would not, by any importunity, be intreated at all to debate that, or to give their opinions about those papers. There were no papers that ever we offered them that had the fate of these: though it was there some of them thought to have found recriminating matter of exceptions, we could never prevail with them to say any thing about them, in word or writing. Once, Bishop Morley told us of their length, to which I answered, that we had told them in our preface, that we were ready to abbreviate any thing which on debate should appear too long; but that the paucity of the prayers made the ordinary Lord's-day prayers far shorter than theirs. And since we had given our exceptions against theirs, if they would neither by word nor writing except against ours, nor give their consent to them, they would not honour their cause or conference. But all would not extort either debates on that subject, or any reprehensions of what we had offered them.

"When they had cast out that part of our desired conference, our next business was, to desire them, by friendly conference, to go over the particulars which we excepted against, and to tell us how much they would abate, and what

alterations they would yield to. This, Bishop Reynolds oft pressed them to, and so did all the rest of us that spake. But they resolutely insisted on it, that they had nothing to do till we had proved that there was a necessity for alteration, which we had not yet done; and that they were there, ready to answer our proofs. We urged them again and again with the very words of the king's declaration and commission: 'That the ends expressed are for the removal of all exceptions, and occasions of exceptions and differences, from among our good subjects, and for giving satisfaction to tender consciences, and the restoring and continuance of peace and amity in the churches. And the means are, to make such reasonable and necessary alterations, corrections, and amendments therein, as shall be agreed upon to be needful and expedient, for the giving satisfaction to tender consciences, and restoring and continuing peace,' &c. We plainly showed hence, that the king supposeth that *some alterations* must be made; but the bishops insisted on two words *necessary* alterations, and *such as should be agreed on.* We answered them, that the word *necessary* hath reference to the ends expressed; viz., the satisfying tender consciences, and is joined with *expedient:* and that it was strange if, when the king had so long and publicly determined of the end, and called us to consult of the means, we should presume now, at last, to contradict him, and to determine that the end itself is unnecessary; and, consequently, no means necessary thereto. What, then, have we all this while been doing? When they are called to *agree* on such necessary means, if they will take advantage of that word, to agree on nothing, that so all endeavours may be frustrated for want of their agreement, God and the world would judge between us, who it is that frustrateth the king's commission, and the hopes of a divided, bleeding church.

"Thus we continued a long time contending about this point, whether some alterations be supposed by the king's declaration and commission to be made by us; or, whether we were anew to dispute that point? But the bishops would have that to be our task, or none, to prove by disputation, that any alteration was necessary to be made; while they confuted our proofs. We told them, that the end being to satisfy tender consciences, and procure unity, those tender consciences did themselves profess, that without some alterations, and these considerable too, they could not be satisfied; and experience told them, that *peace* and unity could not without them be attained. But still they said

that none was necessary, and they would yield to all that we proved necessary. Here we were left in a very great strait; if we should enter upon a dispute with them, we gave up the end and hope of our endeavours; if we refused it, we knew that they would boast, that when it came to the setting-to, we would not so much as attempt to prove any thing unlawful in the liturgy, nor dare dispute it with them. Mr. Calamy, with some others of our brethren, would have had us refuse the motion of disputing as not tending to fulfil the king's commands. We told the bishops, over and over, that they could not choose but know that before we could end one argument in a dispute, our time would be expired; that it could not possibly tend to any accommodation; and that to keep off from personal conference, till within a few days of the expiration of the commission, and then to resolve to do nothing but wrangle out the time in a dispute, as if we were between jest and earnest in the schools, was too visibly in the sight of all the world, to defeat the king's commission, and the expectation of many thousands, who longed for our unity and peace. But we spoke to the deaf; they had other ends, and were other men, and had the art to suit the means unto their ends. For my part, when I saw that they would do nothing else, I persuaded our brethren to yield to a disputation with them, and let them understand that we were far from fearing it, seeing they would give us no hopes of concord. But, withal, first to profess to them, that the guilt of disappointing his majesty and the kingdom, lay not upon us, who desired to obey the king's commission, but on them. Thus we yielded to spend the little time remaining, in disputing with them, rather than go home and do nothing, and leave them to tell the court when they had so provoked us, that we durst not dispute with them, nor were able to prove our accusations of the liturgy."[x]

It was finally agreed that three on each side should be chosen to debate the unlawfulness of the impositions in the Episcopal system. Drs. Pearson, Gunning, and Sparrow, being on the one side; and Baxter, Bates, and Jacomb, on the other. They met accordingly, in the presence of many of the Episcopal party, who attended in considerable numbers; but the Nonconformists, except the three advocates, all absented themselves. The debate itself, which Baxter has recorded at length, was, as

[x] Life, part ii. pp. 233—236.

might have been anticipated, exceedingly unsatisfactory; partaking more of the nature of personal altercation than of grave religious argument. The discussion was carried on by ex-tempore writing as well as by occasional speaking; which must have been as wearisome to all parties, as the history of it would now be tedious and unprofitable. As Baxter chiefly maintained the discussion on the side of the Nonconformists, his numerous writings contain a full exposition and defence of his own views and those of his brethren; while the liturgy remains unaltered, and the defences of its correctness and propriety to this day are very numerous. Baxter's account of the principal disputants, and of the part which they respectively took in the discussion, may appropriately close the review of the Savoy conference.

"The bishop of London, Dr. Sheldon, since archbishop of Canterbury, only appeared the first day of each conference, which, beside that before the king, was but twice in all, as I remember, and meddled not at all in any disputations:[7] but all men supposed that he and Bishop Morley, and next Bishop Hinchman, were the doers and disposers of all such affairs. The archbishop of York (Frewen) spake very little; and came but once or twice in all. Bishop Morley was often there, but not constantly, and with free and fluent words with much earnestness, was the chief speaker of all the bishops, and the greatest interrupter of us: vehemently going on with what he thought serviceable to his end, and bearing down our answers by the said fervour and interruptions. Bishop Cosins was there constantly, and had a great deal of talk with so little logic, natural or artificial, that I perceived no one much moved by any thing he said. But two virtues he showed, though none took him for a magician; one was, that he was excellently well versed in canons, councils, and fathers, which he remembered, when by citing of any passages we tried him. The other was, that as he was of a rustic wit and carriage, so he would endure

[7] The views of Sheldon in the affair of the Savoy conference, are apparent from one circumstance. When Lord Manchester remarked to the king, that he was afraid the terms of the act of uniformity were too rigid for the ministers to comply with, Sheldon replied, "I am afraid they will."—*Bate's Funeral Sermon for Baxter.* It is only necessary to look at some passages of Pepys's 'Memoirs,' to be satisfied that Sheldon was a profane, as well as an unprincipled man; totally unfit for the office which he held.—See particularly vol. ii. p. 342. Burnet says, "He seemed not to have a clear sense of religion, if any at all; and spoke of it most commonly as of an engine of government, and a matter of policy."—*Own Times*, i. p. 257.

more freedom of discourse with him, and was more affable and familiar than the rest. Bishop Hinchman, since bishop of London, was of the most grave, comely, reverend aspect of any of them; and of a good insight in the fathers and councils. Cosins and he, and Dr. Gunning, being all that showed any considerable skill in them among us; in which they were all three of very laudable understandings, and better than any other of either of the parties that I met with. Bishop Hinchman spake calmly and slowly, and not very often; but was as high in his principles and resolutions as any of them.

"Bishop Sanderson, of Lincoln, was sometimes there, but never spake, that I know of, except a very little; but his great learning and worth are known by his labours, and his aged peevishness not unknown.[a]

"Bishop Gauden was our most constant helper: he and Bishop Cosins seldom were absent. And how bitter soever his pen might be, he was the only moderator of all the bishops, except our Bishop Reynolds. He showed no logic, nor meddled in any dispute or point of learning; but he had a calm, fluent, rhetorical tongue; and if all had been of his mind we had been reconciled. But when by many days' conference in the beginning, we had got some moderating concessions from him, and from Bishop Cosins by his means, the rest came in the end, and brake them all.[a]

"Bishop Lucy, of St. David's, spake once or twice a few words, calmly; and so did Bishop Nicholson, of Gloucester, and Bishop Griffiths, of St. Asaph's, though not commissioners. King, bishop of Chichester, I never saw there. Bishop Warner, of Rochester, was once or twice. Lany, of Peterborough, was twice or thrice there; and Walton, bishop of Chester, but neither of them spake much.[b]

"Among all the bishops, there was none who had so promising a face as Dr. Sterne, bishop of Carlisle. He looked so honestly, gravely, and soberly, that I scarce thought such a face could have deceived me. When I was entreating them not

[a] It is said that Bishop Sanderson requested, on his death-bed, that the ejected ministers should be employed again: but of course that was not complied with.—*Baxter's Life*, part ii. p. 363.

[a] It is somewhat singular that the author of the 'Eikon Basilike,' should have been so moderate a man in the debates with the Nonconformists. Baxter's description of his calm and fluent tongue, agrees very well with the style of that celebrated book; the controversy about which is now set at rest, and the claims of Gauden fully ascertained.

[b] Life, part ii. p. 364.

to cast out so many of their brethren through the *nation*, he turned to the rest of the reverend bishops, and said, 'He will not say in the *kingdom*, lest he own a *king*.' This was all I ever heard that worthy prelate say. I told him with grief, that half the charity which became so grave a bishop, might have helped him to a better exposition of the word nation.[c]

"Bishop Reynolds spake much the first day, for bringing them to abatements and moderation; and afterwards he sat with them, and spake now and then a word for moderation. He was a solid, honest man, but through mildness and excess of timorous reverence for great men, altogether unfit to contend with them.

"Mr. Thorndike spake once a few impertinent, passionate words, confuting the opinion which we had received of him from his first writings, and confirming that which his second and last writings had given us of him. Dr. Earle, Dr. Heylin, and Dr. Barwick, never came. Dr. Hacket, since bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, said nothing to make us know any thing of him. Dr. Sparrow said but little, but that little was with a spirit enough for the imposing dividing cause.

"Dr. Peirce and Dr. Gunning did all their work, beside Bishop Morley's discourses, but with great difference in the manner. Dr. Peirce was their true logician and disputant, without whom, as far as I could discern, we should have had nothing from them, but Dr. Gunning's passionate invectives, mixed with some argumentations. He disputed accurately, soberly, and calmly, being but once in any passion; breeding in us great respect for him, and a persuasion that if he had been independent, he would have been for peace, and that if all had been in his power, it would have gone well. He was the strength and honour of that cause, which we doubted whether he heartily maintained. He was their forwardest and greatest speaker; understanding well what belonged to a disputant; a man of greater study and industry than any of them; well read in fathers and councils, and of a ready tongue; I hear, and believe, of very temperate life also, as to all carnal excesses whatsoever; but so vehement for his high, imposing principles, and so over zealous for Arminianism, and formality, and church pomp; and so very eager and fervent in his discourse, that I conceive his prejudice and passion much perverted his judgment. I am sure, they made him lamentably overrun himself in his dis-

[c] Life, part ii. p. 234.

courses. Of Dr. Peirce I will say no more, because he hath said so much of me.[d]

"On our part, Dr. Bates spake very solidly, judiciously, and pertinently, when he spake. As for myself, the reason why I spake so much was, because it was the desire of my brethren, and I was loath to expose them to the hatred of the bishops; but was willing to take it all upon myself, they themselves having so much wit as to be therein more sparing and cautious than I. I thought also that the day and cause commanded me those two things, which then were objected to me as my crimes, viz., speaking too boldly and too long. I thought it a cause that I could comfortaby suffer for, and should as willingly be a martyr for *charity* as for *faith*."[e]

Thus ended the Savoy conference, the last of those attempts to reconcile churchmen and dissenters, in which the court and the authorities in the church took any active part. The issue might have been foreseen at the beginning, from the disposition of the leading Episcopal commissioners, and from the conduct of Sheldon at the very first meeting; beside what was known of the prevailing feelings of the court and the whole royal party. Burnet says, with considerable justice, "The two men that had the chief management of the debate, were the most unfit to heal matters, and the fittest to widen them that could have been found out. Baxter was the opponent, and Gunning was the respondent, who was afterwards advanced, first to Chichester, and then to Ely. He was a man of great reading, and noted for a special subtlety of arguing. All the arts of sophistry were made use of by him on all occasions, in as confident a manner as if they had been sound reasoning. Baxter and he spent some days in much logical arguing, to the diversion of the town, who thought here were a couple of fencers engaged in disputes, that could never be brought to an end, or have any good effect."[f]

The affair having thus ended in a kind of farce, and the ministers having totally failed, as they conceived, in the great object of the conference, they drew up a correct account of the whole affair, and presented it to the king in the form of a petition.

[d] Jeremy Taylor says in one of his letters, "It is no wonder that Baxter undervalues the gentry of England. You know what spirit he is of, but I suppose he has met with his match: for Mr. Peris (Peirce) hath attacked him; and they are joined in the lists."—*Heber's Life of Taylor*, p. 88.

[e] Life, part ii. pp. 363, 364.

[f] Burnet's 'Own Times,' vol. i. pp. 283, 284.

It was written by Baxter, and with a few alterations and amendments, was at last laid before his majesty, with a fair copy of all the papers, by Dr. Manton, Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Bates, and Mr. Baxter. It gives a short history of the conference, and its unsuccessful issue, and concludes by praying that the benefits of the king's declaration might be continued to the people, and that the additions promised in it might be bestowed.[g] It does not appear that Charles said any thing particular at the winding up of the affair. He parted with the ministers civilly, but with a full determination to pursue such measures, as, to adopt the expression of his grandfather respecting the Puritans, would "drive them out of the kingdom, or do worse." The failure offers one of many illustrations of the folly of attempting to reconcile the principles of this world, with the laws and government of the kingdom of Christ. It is true, in regard to such transactions as the Savoy conference, as well as of other things, "that no man can serve two masters."

After the failure of the negociation, the great object of the ministers was, if possible, to get parliament to pass the king's declaration into a law, without which it would be of no permanent force or obligation; and for a time, their expectations were encouraged by the lord chancellor. But when it came to the trial, their hopes all failed them; and the conformity imposed, was made ten times more burdensome than it was before. For beside that the convocation had made the Common Prayer-book more grievous than ever, the parliament made a new act of conformity, with a new form of subscription, and a new declaration to be made against the obligation of the covenant. So that the king's declaration not only died before it came into execution, and all hopes, treaties, and petitions, were not only disappointed, but a weight more grievous than a thousand ceremonies was added to the old conformity, with a heavy penalty.[h]

[g] Life, part ii. pp. 366—368.

[h] Although the Episcopal commissioners would concede nothing to the Nonconformists for the sake of peace, they soon after held a meeting by themselves, for the purpose of preparing certain alterations in the 'Book of Common Prayer,' which they agreed to lay before the next convocation. It assembled on the 8th of May, 1661, and agreed to some alterations and additions. They began with the office for the king's birth and return, which was brought in on the 16th of May, being their second session. On the 18th of May, their third session, they proceeded to the office of baptism for those of riper years. By December 20th, the book was completed and subscribed by the members of both houses.

"The

"The principal alterations which were made in this version, were the following. Several lessons in the calendar were changed for others more proper for the days. The prayers upon particular occasions, were disjoined from the liturgy. The prayers for the parliament, that for all conditions of men, and the general thanksgiving, were added; several of the collects were altered; the epistles and gospels were taken out of the last translation of the Bible, they having been read before, according to the old. The office of baptism for those of riper years, the forms of prayer to be used at sea, the form for the martyrdom of King Charles, and that for the king's return, or, as it is now called, the restoration of the royal family, were added. The book did not go to press till some time after it was subscribed, the Act of Uniformity for enacting it into a law taking up a considerable time."—*Nichol's Preface to the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 10. In all these alterations, it is very clear the clergy took special care that no attention should be shown to the feelings or prejudices of the Nonconformists. This writer has forgotten to state that, among the other improvements made by this convocation on the 'Prayer Book,' the story of 'Bell and the Dragon' was added to the lessons taken from the Apocrypha!

CHAPTER VIII.

1661—1665.

Baxter endeavours to gain possession of Kidderminster—The King and Clarendon favourable to it—Defeated by Sir Ralph Clare and Bishop Morley—Conduct of Sir Ralph Clare to the People of Kidderminster—Baxter's spirited Remonstrance—Insurrection of the Fifth Monarchy Men—Baxter's Preaching in London—Obtains a License from the Archbishop of Canterbury—Attempts to negociate with the Vicar of Kidderminster—Treatment of the People by the Bishop and Clergy—Baxter entirely separated from Kidderminster—Takes leave of the Church—Act of Uniformity—Its Injustice, Impolicy, and Cruelty—Its injurious Effects—Baxter's Marriage—Declaration of Indulgence—Death and Character of Ash—Nelson—Hardships of the Nonconformists—Death of Archbishop Juxon—Succeeded by Sheldon—Act against Private Meetings—Sufferings of the People—Baxter retires to Acton—Works written or published by him during this period—Correspondence—Occasional Communion—Consulted by Ashley—Concluding Memorials of the year 1665.

In the preceding chapter, an account has been given of all the public transactions in which Baxter was engaged from the period of the restoration to the termination of the Savoy conference. His more private or personal affairs now require our attention. In his letter to Lord Clarendon, declining the bishoprick of Hereford, the reader will have observed that he prefers a request of a very humble nature respecting Kidderminster; that if his lordship would bestow some prebendal place on Mr. Dance, the vicar, it would enable him to return to his old and favourite sphere of employment. The following narrative brings before us the failure of this application, and, in consequence, his entire separation from Kidderminster.

"When I had refused a bishoprick, I did it from such reasons as offended not the lord chancellor; and, therefore, instead of it, I presumed to crave his favour to restore me to preach to my people at Kidderminster again, from whence I had been cast out, when many hundreds of others were ejected, upon the re-

storation of all those who had been sequestered. It was but a vicarage, and the vicar was a poor, unlearned, ignorant, silly reader, who little understood what Christianity, and the articles of his creed, did signify. Once a quarter he said something which he called a sermon, which made him the pity or the laughter of the people. This man, being unable to preach himself, kept always a curate under him for that purpose. Before the wars, I had preached there only as a lecturer, and he was bound to pay me sixty pounds per annum; my people were so dear to me, and I to them, that I would have been with them upon the lowest lawful terms. Some laughed at me for refusing a bishoprick, and petitioning to be a reading vicar's curate; but I had little hopes of so good a condition, at least for any considerable time.

"The ruler of the vicar and all the business, was Sir Ralph Clare; an old man, and an old courtier, who carried it towards me, all the time I was there, with great civility and respect, and sent me a purse of money when I went away, which I refused.[1] But his zeal against all who scrupled ceremonies, or who would not preach for prelacy and conformity, was so much greater than his respect for me, that he was the principal cause of my removal. I suppose he thought that when I was far enough off, he could so far rule the town, as to reduce the people to his way. But he and others of that temper little knew, how firm conscientious men are to the matters of their everlasting interest, and how little men's authority can do against the authority of God, with those that are unfeignedly subject to him. Openly, he seemed to be for my return at first, that he might not offend the people; and the lord chancellor seemed very forward in it, and all the difficulty was, how to provide some other place for the old vicar, Mr. Dance, that he might be no loser by the change. It was so contrived, that all must seem forward in it except the vicar. The king himself must be engaged in it; the lord chancellor earnestly presseth it; Sir Ralph is willing and very desirous of it; and the vicar is willing, if he may but be recompensed with

[1] Sir Ralph Clare, of Caldwell, of whom Baxter gives this curious account, was an eminent royalist. He spent a great part of his fortune in the cause of Charles II. Being taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester, he remained a long time in confinement, till released, probably, by Baxter's influence, by Major-General Berry coming into command in the county. It appears, from various parts of Baxter's narrative, that the old knight was a great thorn in his side. In Nash's 'History of Worcestershire,' portraits of Baxter and Sir Ralph are given in one page.—Vol. ii. p. 44.

as good a place, from which I had received but ninety pounds per annum. Either all desire it, or none desire it. But the hinderance was, that among all the livings and prebendaries of England, there was none fit for the poor vicar. A prebend he must not have, because he was incompetent, and yet he is still thought competent to be the pastor of near 4,000 souls! The lord chancellor, to make the business certain, engages himself for a valuable stipend to the vicar, and his own steward shall be commanded to pay it for him. What could he desire more? But the poor vicar was to answer him that this was no security to him; his lordship might withhold that stipend at his pleasure, and then where was his maintenance? Give him but a legal title to any thing of equal value, and he would resign. The patron also was my sure and intimate friend. But no such thing was to be had, and so Mr. Dance must keep his place.

"Though I requested not any preferment but this, yet even for this I resolved I would never be importunate. I only nominated it as the favour which I desired, when their offers in general invited me to ask more; and then I told them, that if it were any way inconvenient to them, I would not request it. Even at the very first I desired, that if they thought it best for the vicar to keep his place, I was willing to take the lecture, which, by his bond, was secured to me, and was still my right; or if that were denied me, I would be his curate while the king's declaration stood in force. But none of these could be accepted with men that were so exceedingly willing. In the end, it appeared that two knights of the county, Sir Ralph Clare and Sir John Packington,[1] who were very great with Dr. Morley, newly-made bishop of Worcester, had made him believe that my interest was so great, and I could do so much with ministers and people in that county, that unless I would bind myself to promote their cause and party, I was not fit to be there. And this bishop, being greatest of any man with the lord chancellor, must obstruct my return to my ancient flock. At last, Sir Ralph Clare did freely tell me, that if I would conform to the orders and ceremonies of the church, preach conformity to the people, and labour to set them right, there was no man in

[1] Sir John Packington, of Westwood, was another warm royalist baronet, in the county of Worcester. He was husband to Lady Packington, to whom that well-known work, 'The Whole Duty of Man,' has been ascribed. Sir John's house was the resort of many of the Episcopal clergy during the wars and the Commonwealth; and Dr. Hammond died in it.—*Athen. Oxen.* iii. 499. *Granger*, v. 377.

England so fit to be there, for no man could more effectually do it; but if I would not, there was no man so unfit for the place, for no man could more hinder it.

"I desired it as the greatest favour of them, that if they intended not my being there they would plainly tell me so, that I might trouble them and myself no more about it; but that was a favour too great to be expected. I had continual encouragement by promises till I was almost tired in waiting on them. At last, meeting Sir Ralph Clare in the bishop's chamber, I desired him, before the bishop, to tell me to my face, if he had any thing against me which might cause all this ado. He told me that I would give the sacrament to none kneeling, and that of eighteen hundred communicants, there were not past six hundred who were for me, and the rest were rather for the vicar. I answered, I was very glad that these words fell out to be spoken in the bishop's hearing. To the first accusation, I told him, that he himself knew I invited him to the sacrament, and offered it him kneeling, and that under my hand in writing; that openly in his hearing in the pulpit, I had promised and told both him and all the rest, I never had nor ever would put any man from the sacrament on the account of kneeling, but leave every one to the posture he should choose. I farther stated, that the reason why I never gave it to any kneeling, was because all who came would sit or stand, and those who were for kneeling only followed him, who would not come unless I would administer it to him and his party on a day by themselves, when the rest were not present; and I had no mind to be the author of such a schism, and make, as it were, two churches of one. But especially the consciousness of notorious scandal, which they knew they must be accountable for, did make many kneelers stay away; and all this he could not deny.

"As to the second charge, I stated, there was a witness ready to say as he did. I knew but one man in the town against me, which was a stranger newly come, one Ganderton, an attorney, steward to the Lord of Abergavenny, a Papist, who was lord of the manor. This one man was the prosecutor, and witnessed how many were against my return. I craved of the bishop that I might send by the next post to know their minds, and if that were so I would take it for a favour to be kept from thence. When the people heard this at Kidderminster, in a day's time they gathered the hands of sixteen hundred of the eighteen hundred communicants, and the rest were such as were from

home. Within four or five days after, I happened to find Sir Ralph Clare with the bishop again, and showed him the hands of sixteen hundred communicants, with an offer of more if they might have time, all very earnest for my return. Sir Ralph was silenced as to that point; but he and the bishop appeared so much the more against my return.

"The letter, which the lord chancellor upon his own offer wrote for me to Sir Ralph Clare, he gave at my request unsealed; and so I took a copy of it before I sent it away, thinking the chief use would be to keep it and compare it with their dealings. It was as followeth:

"'Sir,

"'I am a little out of countenance, that after the discovery of such a desire in his majesty, that Mr. Baxter should be settled in Kidderminster, as he was heretofore, and my promise to you by the king's direction, that Mr. Dance should very punctually receive a recompense by way of a rent upon his or your bills charged here upon my steward, Mr. Baxter hath yet no fruit of this his majesty's good intention towards him; so that he hath too much reason to believe that he is not so frankly dealt with in this particular as he deserves to be. I do again tell you, that it will be very acceptable to the king if you can persuade Mr. Dance to surrender that charge to Mr. Baxter; and in the mean time, and till he is preferred to as profitable an employment, whatever agreement you shall make with him for an annual rent, it shall be paid quarterly upon a bill from you charged upon my steward, Mr. Clutterbucke; and for the exact performance of this, you may securely pawn your full credit. I do most earnestly entreat you, that you will with all speed inform me what we may depend upon in this particular, that we may not keep Mr. Baxter in suspense, who hath deserved very well from his majesty, and of whom his majesty hath a very good opinion; and I hope you will not be the less desirous to comply with him for the particular recommendation of,

"'Sir,

"'Your very affectionate servant,

"'EDWARD HYDE.'"

"Can any thing be more serious, cordial, and obliging, than all this? For a lord chancellor, that hath the business of the kingdom upon his hand, and lords attending him, to take up his time so much and often about so low a vicarage or a curateship, when it is not in the power of the king and the

lord chancellor to procure it for him, though they so vehemently desire it? But, oh! thought I, how much better life do poor men live, who speak as they think, and do as they profess, and are never put upon such shifts as these for their present conveniences! Wonderful! thought I, that men who do so much overvalue worldly honour and esteem, can possibly so much forget futurity, and think only of the present day, as if they regarded not how their actions be judged of by posterity. Notwithstanding all his extraordinary favour, since the day the king came in, I never received, as his chaplain, or as a preacher, or on any account, the value of one farthing of public maintenance. So that I, and many a hundred more, had not had a piece of bread but for the voluntary contribution, whilst we preached, of another sort of people: yea, while I had all this excess of favour, I would have taken it indeed for an excess, as being far beyond my expectations, if they would but have given me liberty to preach the Gospel, without any maintenance, and leave me to beg my bread."[k]

There is something very singular in this part of Baxter's history. Giving Clarendon, and Charles, who also appears to have been a party, credit for sincerity in their professed friendship for Baxter, it is extraordinary that they should have been defeated by the management of the "old civil courtier," Sir Ralph, or the wilely bishop of Worcester, Dr. Morley. Yet, if the whole was only designed to amuse and disappoint Baxter, what a view does it give of the craft and duplicity of the new government, and the high honour of the cavaliers! It is evident, from the humour with which Baxter tells the story, that he was convinced the whole was a piece of artifice. It seems probable that Charles and Clarendon would have been willing that he should get back to Kidderminster, but the bishop was determined he should not, and therefore the affair was so managed that the old vicar was made the scape goat. So little dependence can be placed on the promises of courts, where their own interests are not likely to be served by the parties!

"A little after this, Sir Ralph Clare and others caused the houses of the people of the town of Kidderminster to be searched for arms, and if any had a sword it was taken from them. Meeting him with the bishop, I desired him to tell us why his neighbours were so used, as if he would have made the world believe they were seditious, or rebels, or dangerous per-

[k] Life, part ii. pp. 298–300.

sons, that should be treated as enemies to the king. He answered me, that it was because they would not bring out their arms when they were commanded, but said they had none; whereas they had arms on every occasion to appear on the behalf of Cromwell. This great disingenuity of so ancient a gentleman towards his neighbours, whom he pretended kindness to, made me break forth into some more than ordinary freedom of reproof; so that I answered him, we had thought our condition hard, that by strangers, who knew us not, we should be ordinarily traduced and misrepresented: but this was most sad and marvellous, that a gentleman so civil, should, before the bishop, speak such words against a corporation, which he knew I was able to confute, and were so contrary to truth. I asked him whether he did not know that I publicly and privately spake against the usurpers, and declared them to be rebels; and whether he took not the people to be of my mind; and whether I and they had not hazarded our liberty by refusing the engagement against the king and House of Lords, when he and others of his mind had taken it. He confessed that I had been against Cromwell; but the people had always, on every occasion, appeared in arms for him. I told him that he struck me with admiration, that it should be possible for him to live in the town, and yet believe what he said to be true, or yet to speak it in our hearing if he knew it to be untrue. I professed also that having lived there sixteen years since the wars, I never knew that they once appeared in arms for Cromwell, or any usurper; and challenged him, upon his word, to name one. I could not get him to name any time, till I had urged him to the utmost; and then he instanced in the time when the Scots army fled from Worcester. I challenged him to name one man of them that was at Worcester fight, or bare arms there, or at any time for the usurpers: and when he could name none, I told him that all that was done to my knowledge in sixteen years of that time was but this, that when the Scots fled from Worcester, as all the country sought in covetousness to catch some of them for the sake of their horses, so two idle rogues of Kidderminster, that never communicated with me any more than he did, had drawn two or three neighbours with them in the night, as the Scots fled, to catch their horses. But I never heard of three that they caught; and I appealed to the bishop and his conscience, whether he—that being urged, could name no more but this—did ingenuously accuse the corporation, magistrates, and people, to

have appeared on all occasions in arms for Cromwell? When they had no more to say, I told them by this we saw what measures to expect from strangers of his mind, when he that is our neighbour, and noted for eminent civility, never sticketh to speak such things even of a people among whom he hath still lived.

"At the same time, about twenty, or two-and-twenty furious fanatics, called fifth-monarchy men, consisting of one Venner, a wine-cooper, and his church that he preached unto, being transported with enthusiastic pride, did rise up in arms, and fought in the streets like madmen, against all that stood in their way, till there were some killed, and the rest taken, judged, and executed,[1] I wrote a letter at this time to my mother-in-law, containing nothing but our usual matter, even encouragements to her in her age and weakness, fetched from the nearness of her rest, together with the report of this news, and some sharp and vehement words against the rebels. By means of Sir John Packington, or his soldiers, the post was searched, and my letter intercepted, opened and revised, and by Sir John sent up to London to the bishops, and the lord chancellor. It was a wonder, that having read it they were not ashamed to send it up; but joyful would they have been, could they have found but a word in it which could possibly have been distorted to an evil sense, that malice might have had its prey. I went to the lord chancellor and complained of this usage, and that I had not the common liberty of a subject to converse by letters with my own family. He disowned it, and blamed men's rashness, but excused it from the distempers of the times; yet he and the bishops confessed they had seen the letter, and that there was nothing in it but what was good and pious. Two days after, came the Lord Windsor, lord lieutenant of the county, and governor of Jamaica, with Sir Charles Littleton, the king's cup-bearer, to bring me my letter again to my lodgings. Lord Windsor told me the lord chancellor appointed him to do it; so after some expression

[1] Venner's mad insurrection may be considered as the last of the fifth-monarchy system for many years. It illustrates the length to which men may be carried by adopting mistaken views of Scripture, and of the principles of the kingdom of Christ. It is quite of a piece, though on a smaller scale, with the conduct of the Munster fanatics; and was a most unfortunate occurrence, not merely for the poor deluded individuals themselves, but for the country. The court greedily laid hold of it to justify the adoption of measures to crush the dissenters, and establish a standing army, by which the arbitrary designs of Charles and his new government might be effectually accomplished. — *Neal*, iv. 278—280.

of the abuse, I thanked him for his great civility and favour. But I saw how far that sort of men were to be trusted."[m]

Being removed from his beloved flock in Worcestershire, and uncertain whether he might ever return to them or not, he refused to take any other charge, but preached gratuitously in London, where he happened to be invited. When he had done this above a year, he thought a fixed place was better, which led him to join Dr. Bates, at St. Dunstan's in the West, where he preached once a week, for which the people allowed him some maintenance. Before this time he scarcely ever preached a sermon in the city, but he had accounts from Westminster that he had preached seditiously or against the government; when he had neither a thought nor a word of any such tendency. Sometimes he preached purposely against faction, schism, sedition, and rebellion, and those sermons also were reported to be factious and seditious. Some sermons at Covent Garden were so much accused, that he thought it necessary to print them in his own defence. They are entitled the 'Formal Hypocrite Detected,' &c. When they appeared, he heard not a word more against them. The accusations against him, were, in general, of sedition and faction, and speaking against the church; but not one syllable charged of a particular nature.

"The congregation being crowded," he says, "was that which provoked envy to accuse me: and one day the crowd did drive me from my place. It fell out that at St. Dunstan's church, in the midst of sermon, a little lime and dust, and perhaps a piece of a brick or two, fell down in the steeple or belfrey near the boys; so that they thought the steeple and church were falling; which put them all into so confused a haste to get away, that the noise of their feet in the galleries sounded like the falling of the stones. The people crowded out of doors; the women left some of them a scarf, and some a shoe behind them, and some in the galleries cast themselves down upon those below, because they could not get down the stairs. I sat down in the pulpit, seeing and pitying their vain distemper, and as soon as I could be heard, I entreated their silence, and went on. The people were no sooner quieted and got in again, and the auditory composed, but some who stood upon a wainscot-bench, near the communion-table, brake the bench with their weight, so that the noise renewed the fear again, and they were worse disordered than before. One old woman was heard at the

[m] Life, part ii. pp. 300, 301.

church-door asking forgiveness of God for not taking the first warning, and promising, if God would deliver her this once, she would take heed of coming hither again. When they were again quieted I went on;[n] but the church having before an ill name as very old, rotten, and dangerous, it put the parish upon a resolution to pull down all the roof, and build it better, which they have done with so great reparation of the walls and steeple, that it is now like a new church and much more commodious for the hearers.[o]

"While the church was repairing, I preached out my quarter at St. Bride's, at the other end of Fleet Street; where the common prayer being used by the curate before sermon, I occasioned abundance to be at common prayer, who before avoided it: and yet my accusations still continued. On the week days, Mr. Ashurst, with about twenty citizens, desired me to preach a lecture in Milk Street; for which they allowed me forty pounds per annum, which I continued near a year, till we were all silenced. At the same time I preached once every Lord's day at Blackfriars, where Mr. Gibbons, a judicious man, was minister. In Milk Street, I took money, because it came not from the parishioners, but from strangers, and so was no wrong to the minister, Mr. Vincent, a very holy, blameless man. But at Blackfriars I never took a penny, because it was the parishioners who called me, who would else be less able and ready to help their worthy pastor, who went to God by a consumption, a little after he was silenced and put out. At these two churches I ended the course of my public ministry, unless God cause an undeserved resurrection.[o]

"Before this, I resolved to go to the archbishop of Canterbury, then bishop of London, to ask him for his license to preach in his diocese. Some brethren blamed me for it, as being an owning of prelatical usurpation. I told them, that the king had given him a power to suffer or hinder me in my duty, be-

[n] This is a remarkable instance of the composure of Baxter in very alarming circumstances; and not the only occasion on which he displayed great fortitude and self-possession. Dr. Bates tells us, when the confusion was over, Baxter rose and said, "We are in the service of God, to prepare ourselves that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving world; when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat."—*Funeral Sermon for Baxter.* Another instance of alarm occurred when he was preaching at the place over the market-house, in St. James's; where his wife displayed a courage and presence of mind equal to his own.—*Life of his Wife*, pp. 60, 61. edit. 1826.

[o] Life, part ii. pp. 301, 302.

sides having power as the church magistrate or officer of the king; and though I was under no necessity, I would not refuse a lawful thing, when authority required it. The archbishop received me with very great expression of respect, offered me his license, and would let his secretary take no money of me. But when he offered me the book to subscribe in, I told him that he knew the king's declaration exempted us from subscription. He bade me write what I would: I told him what I resolved, and what I thought meet of him to expect, I would do of choice, though I might forbear. And so, in Latin, I subscribed my promise not to preach against the doctrine of the church, or the ceremonies established by law in his diocese, while I used his license. I told him also how grievous it was to me to be daily taunted with such general accusations behind my back, and asked him why I was never accused of any particulars. He confessed to me, that if they had got any particulars that would have deserved notice, I should have heard particularly from him. I scarce think that ever I preached a sermon without a spy to give them his report of it.[p]

"Shortly after our disputation at the Savoy, I went to Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, and preached there but once, from Matt. xxii. 12, 'And he was speechless.' I spake not a word that was any nearer kin to sedition, or that had any greater tendency to provoke them, than by showing that wicked men, and the refusers of grace, however they may now have many things to say to excuse their sin, will, at last, be speechless, and not dare stand to their wickedness before God. Yet did the bishop of Worcester tell me, when he silenced me, that the bishop of London had showed him letters from one of the hearers, assuring him that I preached seditiously. So little security was any man's innocency, who displeased the bishops, to his reputation with that party, if he had but one auditor that desired to get favour by accusing him. A multitude of such experiences made me perceive, when I was silenced, that there was some mercy in it, in the midst of judgment; for I should scarcely have preached a sermon, or put up a prayer to God, which one or other, through malice or hope of favour, would not have been tempted to accuse as guilty of some heinous crime.[q]

"Soon after my return to London, I went into Worcestershire, to try whether it were possible to have any honest terms

[p] Life, part i. p. 302. [q] Ibid. p. 374.

from the reading vicar there, that I might preach to my former flock; but when I had preached twice or thrice, he denied me liberty to preach any more. I offered then to take my lecture, which he was bound to allow me, under a bond of £500; but he refused it. I next offered to be his curate, and he refused it. I then offered to preach for nothing, and he refused it: and, lastly, I desired leave but once to administer the sacrament to the people, and preach my farewell sermon to them; but he would not consent. At last, I understood that he was directed by his superiors to do what he did: but Mr. Baldwin, an able preacher, whom I left there, was yet permitted.

"At that time, my aged father lying in great pain of the stone and strangury, I went to visit him, twenty miles further: and while I was there, Mr. Baldwin came to me, and told me that he also was forbidden to preach. We returned both to Kidderminster, and having a lecture at Shiffnal in the way, I preached there, and staid not to hear the evening sermon, because I would make haste to the bishop. It fell out that my turn at another lecture was on the same day with that at Shiffnal, viz., at Cleobury, in Shropshire; and many were met in expectation to hear me. But a company of soldiers were there, as the country thought, to have apprehended me; who shut the doors against the ministers that would have preached in my stead, bringing a command to the churchwarden to hinder any one who had not got a license from the bishop; so that the poor people who had come from far, were fain to go home with grieved hearts.

"The next day it was confidently reported, that a certain knight offered the bishop his troop to apprehend me, if I offered to preach: and the people dissuaded me from going to the bishop, supposing my liberty in danger. I went that morning, with Mr. Baldwin, and in the hearing of him and Dr. Warmestry, then dean of Worcester, I reminded the bishop of his promise to grant me his license, &c., but he refused me liberty to preach in his diocese; though I offered to preach only on the Creed, the Lord's-prayer, and the Ten Commandments—catechistical principles, and only to such as had no preaching.

"Bishop Morley told me when he silenced me, that he would take care that the people should be no losers, but should be taught as well as they were by me. When I was gone, he got awhile a few scandalous men, with some that were more civil to keep up the lecture, till the paucity of their auditors gave them

a pretence to put it down. He came himself one day and preached a long invective against them and me as Presbyterians, and I know not what; so that the people wondered that a man would venture to come up into a pulpit and speak so confidently to those he knew not, the things which they commonly knew to be untrue. But this sermon was so far from winning any of them to the estimation of their new bishop, or curing what he called the admiration of my person, which was his great endeavour, that they were much confirmed in their former judgments. But still the bishop looked at Kidderminster as a factious, schismatical, Presbyterian people, that must be cured of their overvaluing of me, and then they would be cured of all the rest. Whereas if he had lived with them the twentieth part so long as I had done, he would have known that they were neither Presbyterians, nor factious, nor schismatical, nor seditious; but a people that quietly followed their hard labour, learned the holy Scriptures, lived a holy, blameless life, in humility and peace with all men, and never had any sect or separated party among them, but abhorred all faction and sidings in religion, and lived in love and Christian unity.

"When the bishop was gone, the dean came and preached about three hours to cure them of the admiration of my person; and a month after came again and preached over the same, persuading the people that they were Presbyterians, and schismatical, and were led to it by their overvaluing of me. The people admired the temerity of these men, and really thought that they were scarce well in their wits, who would go on to speak things so far from truth, of men whom they never knew, and that to their own faces. Many have gone about by backbiting to make people believe a false report of others, but few will think to persuade men to believe it of themselves, who know the matter much better than the reprover doth. Yet beside all this, their lecturers went on in the same strain; and one Mr. Pitt, who lived in Sir John Packington's house with Dr. Hammond, was often at this work, being of the judgment and spirit of Dr. Gunning, and Dr. Peirce, calling them Presbyterians, rebellious, serpents, and generation of vipers, unlikely to escape the damnation of hell, yet not knowing his accusation to be true of one man of them. For there was but one, if one Presbyterian in the town; the plain honest people minding nothing but piety, unity, charity, and their callings. This dealing, instead of winning them to the preacher, drove them from the lecture, and

then, as I said, they accused the people of deserting it, and put it down.

"In place of this ordinary preacher, they set up one, of the best parts they could get, who was far from what his patrons spake him to be; he was quickly weary and went away. They next set up a poor dry man, who had been a schoolmaster near us, and after a little time he died. They then took another course, and set up a young man, the best they could get, who took the contrary way to the first, over applauded me in the pulpit, spoke well of themselves, and used them kindly. They were naturally glad of one that had some charity. Thus the bishop used that flock, who say that till then they never knew so well what a bishop was, or were before so guilty of that dislike of Episcopacy of which they were so frequently and vehemently accused. I heard not of one person among them, who was won to the love of prelacy or formality after my removal."[r]

"Having parted with my dear flock, I need not say with mutual sense and tears, I left Mr. Baldwin to live privately among them and oversee them in my stead, and visit them from house to house; advising them, notwithstanding all the injuries they had received, and all the failings of the ministers that preached to them, and the defects of the present way of worship, that they should keep to the public assemblies and make use of such helps as might be had in public, together with their private helps. Only in three cases they ought to absent themselves. When the minister was one that was utterly insufficient, as not being able to teach them the articles of the faith and essentials of true religion; such as, alas! they had known to their sorrow. When the minister preached any heresy, or doctrine which was directly contrary to some article of the faith, or necessary part of godliness. When in the application he set himself against the ends of his office, to make a holy life seem odious, to keep men from it, and to promote the interests of Satan; yet not to take every bitter reflection upon themselves or others, occasioned by difference of opinion or interest, to be a sufficient cause to say that the minister preacheth against godliness, or to withdraw themselves."[s]

"When the Act of Uniformity was passed, it gave the ministers who could not conform, no longer time than till Bartholomew's

[r] Life, part i. pp. 374–376. [s] Ibid. p. 376.

day, August 24, 1662, and then they must be all cast out. This fatal day called to remembrance the French massacre, when on the same day thirty or forty thousand Protestants perished by Roman religious zeal and charity. I had no place of my own; but I preached twice a week, by request, in other men's congregations, at Milk Street and Blackfriars. The last sermon that I preached in public was on May 25. The reasons why I gave over sooner than most others were, because lawyers did interpret a doubtful clause in the act, as ending the liberty of lecturers at that time; because I would let authority soon know that I intended to obey in all that was lawful; because I would let all ministers in England understand in time, whether I intended to conform or not: for, had I staid to the last day, some would have conformed the sooner, from a supposition that I intended it. These, with other reasons, moved me to cease three months before Bartholomew day, which many censured for awhile, but, afterwards, better saw the reasons of it." [t]

Thus ended Baxter's ministry in the church of England. Most persons will probably think that he carried his conscientious scruples too far; and that he might, at least, have continued his labours till he was obliged to desist. The reasons assigned for his conduct, however, possess considerable force; but, whether they are approved or not, all must respect the man who was capable of acting in so noble and disinterested a manner. He carried his deference for authority in this case farther than he might have done; but his example probably led others to act in the same decided manner when the fatal day arrived, who might have hesitated had there been a doubt how such a man as Baxter was likely to act.

The Act of Uniformity, for which the country was indebted chiefly to Hyde and Sheldon, by which two thousand of the most excellent ministers of the church of England were ejected from their livings, took effect, as stated by Baxter, on Bartholomew's day, August 24, 1662. Every thing practicable, and consistent with what they regarded as the will of God and the rights of conscience, had been done by the leaders of the Nonconformists, to prevent the passing of this act, or to procure some modification of its provisions; but all was in vain. Hatred of the nonconforming clergy, a desire to be revenged for the wrongs which it

[t] Life, part ii. p. 384.

was conceived they had done to the church, and the supposed necessity of the times, urged forward the royal and episcopal party, flushed with recent success, and eager to secure the advantage which they had acquired.

To many, it may seem as if the Nonconformists brought their ejection on themselves by their needless scruples. This was the charge made against them at the time, and in which many churchmen, and all who value ease, honour, or emolument, more than conscience, continue to join. Those, however, who consider themselves bound to follow the revealed law of Heaven in all matters of religion, and to submit to their fellow-creatures only in things accordant with that law, or which are left undetermined by it, will judge very differently the conduct of these sincere confessors.

It is not to be supposed that all the ejected ministers were of the same mind on every point in which their separation from the church was involved; on the contrary, they differed considerably from each other, though they agreed generally in the unlawfulness of submitting on the terms which were proposed to them. Some laid the chief stress on one point, others on a different one; some would have gone a considerable length in submitting to authority; others objected more decidedly to its exercise. Some were, perhaps, influenced by public opinion, and regard to consistency; while the great majority appear to have acted from a conscientious regard to duty on the one hand, and fear of evil on the other.

The things imposed on them, if they would keep their livings or lectureships, or any post of service in the established church, were the following:—They must submit to be re-ordained, if not episcopally ordained before. They must declare their unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church of England; together with the Psalter and the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons, &c.; to which was attached an equivalent subscription. They must take the oath of canonical obedience, and promise subjection to their ordinary, according to the canons of the church. They must abjure the solemn league and covenant; and they must also abjure the taking of arms, upon any pretence whatsoever, against the king, or any one commissioned by him. These things were all strictly enjoined

without any thing to qualify or soften them, or room left for a dispensation. So that if a man scrupled but at one point, though he could have complied with all the rest, he was as certainly ejected as if he had disputed the whole."

Those who wish to examine the full weight of these five points, must consult the Tenth Chapter of Dr. Calamy's 'Abridgment,' in which that learned divine illustrates, at great length, their bearing on many important matters, and supports, by reasonings which have never been fairly met, the justifiable secession of the Nonconformists from the church of England, on those grounds. The conditions were so framed, that, independently of religious considerations, it was impossible men of principle, who had taken an active part in the former changes, or who had approved of those changes, could submit to them. They extended to some things by an almost wanton stretch of authority, and involved a total departure from all just views of civil liberty, the cause of which must be regarded as virtually abandoned by those who submitted to them. All the temporal interests of the ejected party were on the side of compliance with the requirements of authority; whatever, therefore, may be thought of their judgment, every candid individual will give them full credit for sincerity.

But it is not necessary to rest the defence of the Nonconformist Confessors on this ground. They were not a body of weak, well-meaning men, for whose conscientiousness we may entertain a very high respect, while we have little reverence for their understanding. The leading individuals who influenced their brethren, were not only a match, but an over-match for their opponents. Among the churchmen of the day, there were none superior, as scholars and divines, to Calamy, Bates, Owen, Howe, Baxter, and many others who could be mentioned. They were as capable of forming enlarged and comprehensive views of truth and duty, as Pearson, Gunning, Morley, or any other of their episcopal adversaries; while, as it regards the evidences of Christian character and devotedness, there are few of the class from which they seceded, who will admit of being compared with them.

It is alleged, that the points on which they differed were, in themselves, of very inferior importance, and therefore to create so much altercation, and cause so extensive a division about

" Calamy, vol. i. p. 196.

them, are proofs of narrow-mindedness and illiberality. It is demanded often in a tone of triumph, whether the things required were in themselves sinful; if not sinful, it is inferred they must be innocent; and hence the folly and impropriety of disputing about them is ascertained.

To all this it has been replied, that if the things referred to are so unimportant in themselves, why were they not viewed so by the imposers, as well as by the refusers? It must have been worse, on this principle, to impose such things, than to resist their imposition. In fact, this was the grand matter of dispute between the parties. Importance and magnitude were given to the points in debate, by the very circumstance of their being enforced by human authority, and that implicit obedience to them was required from all. It was not so much a question, whether a prescribed form of prayer might be used in public, as whether no prayer should ever be employed but that form; and that without deviation in all circumstances. It was not whether the cross in baptism might be used by those who approved of it; but whether any child should be baptised, unless the minister and the parents both agreed to employ it. It was not, whether men might observe the Lord's-supper kneeling; but whether the Lord's-supper should be refused to all who would not kneel. The same kind of remark will apply to all the other matters under discussion between the church and the Nonconformists, at this time.

Now, will any man who has the least regard for conscience, or for common sense, aver, that these were questions of a trifling or unimportant nature? It is obvious, on the contrary, that they embrace the very first principles of religious obligation, and lie at the root of all enlightened views of our duty to God, and of what constitutes acceptable obedience in his sight. In answer to the inquiry, how far the things required were themselves sinful; it may be said, many of the Nonconformists believed them to be so: and if this was their belief, though they had been mistaken, they were not only justified in refusing compliance, but bound to do so, at all hazards. They regarded them as human additions to the laws and ordinances of Christ; as imposed without authority from him; as calculated to interfere with the obedience which they owed to him alone in all matters of religion; as popish in their origin and tendency; and as destructive of that liberty with which Christ has made his people free. The controversy, therefore, was not about a

few trifling circumstances or adjuncts; it was a grand struggle for principle, liberty, and the honour of Christ.

I am aware it may be said, that all the Nonconformists did not clearly understand these principles themselves, and would not have been averse to impose in their turn. What then? does it follow that they had not truth or right on their side, when they were obliged to contend for principles in reference to themselves, the full extent of whose operation they did not clearly understand? Certainly not. The principles which they endeavoured to maintain, and for which many of them suffered the loss of all things, are those of eternal and immutable truth; and the men who contributed to clear off even a part of the rubbish in which they had long been buried, however imperfect they may have been in some respects, are entitled to our deepest reverence.

To do justice to those men, we ought to place ourselves in their circumstances. Suppose that the rulers of the church of England were now to determine, 'That, on or before the 24th of August, 1830, the present occupants of livings, curacies, &c., shall subscribe a declaration, engaging themselves to baptise no child without the employment of salt, oil, and spittle, as a part of the ordinance of baptism; to administer the Lord's-supper to those only who should previously bow to the sacred chalice, and submit to a bread wafer being put upon their tongues.' What would the serious clergy of the church think of such a demand? Would they submit to it, as a just exercise of ecclesiastical authority? Would they not, to a man, abandon their livings, rather than allow their consciences thus to be lorded over and defiled? Or, if they submitted to such exactions, would they not be justly regarded by their flocks and countrymen, as traitors and time-servers? Would not any one who should speak of such a controversy as unimportant, or as relating merely to a few innocent circumstances, in no respect affecting the nature of the ordinances of Christ, be considered as an impertinent trifler? Yet this supposed case is not stronger than that of the Nonconformists. They were placed in this very situation, and viewed the condition to which they were obliged to submit, as a similar interference would now be regarded.

The injustice and cruelty of the Bartholomew act, are strikingly apparent in two circumstances. It was designed to operate as a *post-facto* law. Had it been merely prospective in its operation, something more might have been alleged in its

favour than can now be done. A great multitude of the ministers of the church, had obtained possession of their livings while no such conformity was either required or considered necessary. Many of them, indeed, would not have entered the church at all, if such conditions had been prescribed at their entrance, or their enactment afterwards anticipated. To pass a law, then, which should compel all those persons, either to violate their consciences, or to abandon stations of usefulness, and the honourable means of living, was most flagrant injustice.

But even this is not all the hardship of the case. "So great," says Locke, "was the zeal in carrying on this church affair, and so blind was the obedience required, that if you compute the time of passing this act, with the time allowed for the clergy to subscribe the Book of Common Prayer, thereby established; you shall plainly find, it could not be printed and distributed, so as one man in forty could have seen and read the book they did so perfectly assent and consent to."[x]

When these facts are considered, instead of being surprised that two thousand ministers preferred leaving the church rather than submit to such conditions, it is more surprising that the many thousands who remained, should have found means of reconciling their consciences to the terms. It is not so much to the honour of the Nonconformists, that they left the church, as it is to the disgrace of the Conformists, that they continued in it. Had they, as a body, resisted the iniquitous measure, it must have been abandoned. But their tame submission in this instance, prepared the court to make further encroachments, and to expect implicit obedience from the clergy, to whatever should be enacted. Such tergiversation and inconsistency on the part of ministers of religion, must have had a most injurious influence on the minds of worldly men; who could not have any respect for those who so decidedly discovered that they looked "more to the things which were seen and temporal, than to the things which are unseen and eternal." Not a few of them were *jus divinum* Prelatists in the time of Charles I; took the Presbyterian covenant under the Long Parliament; submitted to the

[x] Locke's Works, x. 203, 204. The Act of Uniformity was passed on the 13th of May, 1662. All the ministers of the church were required to subscribe and conform before the 24th of August following. It is certain the Common Prayer-book, with the alterations and amendments made by the Convocation, did not leave the press till a few days before the 24th of August; it was therefore impossible the great body of the ministers could possess the book.

Independent engagement; and once more assented and consented to an altered prayer-book, which they had never seen.[y]

The effects resulting both to the Nonconformists and to the nation from their ejection, were of a melancholy description. Multitudes of ministers and their families were involved in great distress and poverty. Few of them had any independent property; and those to whom they afterwards ministered, when they had an opportunity, were generally poor, and therefore little able to assist them. They were not only driven out of the church, but persecuted after they were out. Their usefulness was curtailed; and, in many instances, entirely destroyed. The churches they vacated were generally supplied by men of very different principles and spirit from themselves. The established church was converted into a mass of frigid, outward uniformity, destitute of the vitality of genuine religion; and more than a century elapsed before it recovered from the effects of this almost fatal blow.

Out of evil, however, the Most High often educes good, without removing the blame from its authors. This was the case in regard to the Bartholomew ejection. If they who, imitating the vicar of Bray, change with every change of the times, harden men in wickedness and infidelity, the contrary practice must, by the divine blessing, produce an opposite effect. The testimony to the value of truth and the rights of conscience, borne by two thousand men voluntarily suffering the loss of their livings, their worldly respectability, and all hope of preferment, could not have been altogether in vain. Their patience and fortitude under suffering, with their blameless lives, added powerfully to the weight of their preaching; so that many of them were probably as useful without, as ever they had been within, the pale of the church. Besides, what they endured contributed greatly to the ultimate triumph of civil and religious freedom. They were the instruments of forming an extensive body of dissenters in all parts of the kingdom, by whose means chiefly the power of religion was preserved from destruction for many years, and to whom the country has been indebted for

[y] This conduct of the clergy led Locke to say of them, "The clergy readily complied with the Bartholomew act; for you know that sort of men are taught rather to obey than understand; and to use that learning they have, to justify, not to examine what their superiors command."—*Letter to a Person of Quality*, *Works*, x. 202. Could a greater reproach be uttered against the ministers of religion?

more blessings than will ever be known or acknowledged in this world.[s]

Shortly after the Bartholomew ejection, an event of great importance occurred in the history of Baxter, and which appears to have made considerable noise; I refer to his marriage. Some time before it took place, he tells us it was reported, and "rung about every where, partly as a wonder, and partly as a crime; and that the king's marriage was scarcely more talked of than his." For this, he had no doubt furnished some occasion by the manner in which he had expressed himself respecting ministers marrying; which he considered barely lawful, and had for many years, while engaged in the most laborious part of his ministry, dispensed with it himself. He was now considerably advanced in life, being in his forty-seventh year. His habits were formed,

[s] It is deplorable to find such a man as Mr. Southey, attempting to defend or palliate the iniquity and impolicy of this wicked act. "The measure," he says, "was complained of as an act of enormous cruelty and persecution; and the circumstance of its being fixed for St. Bartholomew's day, gave the complainants occasion to compare it with the atrocious deed committed upon that day against the Huguenots in France. They were careful not to remember, that the same day, and for the same reason (because the tithes were commonly due at Michaelmas), had been appointed for the former ejectment, when four times as many of the loyal clergy were deprived for fidelity to their sovereign. No small proportion of the present sufferers had obtained their preferments by means of that tyrannical deprivation; they did but now drink of the cup which they had administered to others."—*Book of the Church*, ii. 467.

Seldom has a larger portion of misstatement been compressed into so small a space as in the above passage. It would have been obliging, if the learned author had produced his authorities for his assertions. But these are carefully suppressed throughout the work. Hallam remarks on the passage respecting Bartholomew's day: "That the day was chosen in order to deprive the incumbent of a whole year's tithes, Mr. Southey has learned from Burnet; and it aggravates the cruelty of the proceeding. But where has he found his precedent? The Anglican clergy were ejected for refusing the covenant at no one definite period, as, on reflection, Mr. Southey would be aware; nor can I find any one parliamentary ordinance in Husband's collection, that mentions St. Bartholomew's day. There was a precedent, indeed, in that case, which the government of Charles did not choose to follow. One-fifth of the income had been reserved for the dispossessed incumbents."—*Constitutional History of England*, ii. 460, note.

But this is not the only misrepresentation in the above passage. Southey asserts that *four times* the number of the ministers had been ejected of "the loyal clergy," as he is pleased to denominate them. Eight thousand ministers of the church formerly dispossessed of their livings! And for what? For their loyalty to their sovereign! And by whom? By the Nonconformist ministers, who were only now drinking the cup which they had given to others! The historian of the church is really unbounded in his demands on the confidence of his readers, when he expects them to receive such monstrous things on his bare authority.

his infirmities of body many, and the peculiarities of his views and dispositions such, as not to afford great encouragement to hope that an individual would easily be found with whom an alliance could be formed likely to be productive of lasting comfort to both parties. Such a person, however, was found, who appears to have been eminently fitted to promote the happiness and aid the usefulness of this excellent man. From what he calls "a Breviate of her life," which will be noticed in another place, I extract at present a few particulars.

"We were born in the same county, within three miles and a half of each other, but she of one of the chief families in the county, and I but of a mean freeholder, called a gentleman, for his ancestors' sake. Her father, Francis Charlton, esq., was one of the best justices of the peace in that county, a grave and worthy man, who did not marry till he was aged and gray, and died while his children were very young. There were three of them, of which the eldest daughter and the only son are yet alive. He had one surviving brother, who, after the father's death, maintained a long and costly suit about the guardianship of the heir. This uncle, Robert, was a comely, sober, gentleman; but the wise and good mother, Mary, durst not trust her only son in the hands of one that was his next heir; and she thought that nature gave her a greater interest in him than an uncle had. This was in the heat of the late civil war, and Robert, being for the parliament, had the advantage of strength, which put her to seek relief at Oxford from the king, and afterwards to marry one Mr. Hanmer, who was for the king, to make her interest that way. Her house, being a sort of small castle, was then garrisoned for the king. At last Robert procured it to be besieged by the parliament's soldiers, stormed and taken; where the mother and the children saw part of the buildings burnt, and some lie dead before their eyes; and so Robert got possession of the children.

"Afterwards, however, she, by great wisdom and diligence, surprised them, secretly conveyed them to Mr. Bernard's, in Essex, and secured them against all his endeavours. The wars being ended, and she, as guardian, possessing her son's estate, took him to herself, and used his estate as carefully as for herself; but out of it conscientiously paid the debts of her husband, repaired some of the ruined houses, and managed things faithfully, according to her best discretion, until her son marrying, took his estate into his own hands.

"She, being before unknown to me, came to Kidderminster, desiring me to take a house for her alone. I told her that I would not be guilty of doing any thing which should separate a mother from an only son, who in his youth had so much need of her counsel, conduct, and comfort; and that if passion in her, or any fault in him, had caused a difference, the love which brought her through so much trouble for him, should teach her patience. She went home, but shortly came again, and took a house without my knowledge.

"When she had been there alone awhile, her unmarried daughter, Margaret, then about seventeen or eighteen years of age, came after her from her brother's, resolving not to forsake the mother who deserved her dearest love; though sometimes she went to Oxford to her eldest sister, wife to Mr. Ambrose Upton, then canon of Christ-church. At this time, the good old mother lived as a blessing among the honest poor weavers of Kidderminster, strangers to her, whose company for their piety she chose before all the vanities of the world. In which time, my acquaintance with her made me know, that notwithstanding she had been formerly somewhat passionate, she was a woman of manly patience in her great trials; of prudence, piety, justice, impartiality, and other virtues." [a]

The preaching of Baxter appears to have been useful to Miss Charlton. It produced very powerful impressions, and the deepest distress of mind, which he was called to assist in relieving. She became, in due time, an eminent Christian, and in all respects worthy to be the wife of Richard Baxter. But we must give his own account of the marriage, and a few particulars respecting his wife.

"The unsuitableness of our age, and my former known purposes against marriage and against the conveniency of ministers marrying, who have no sort of necessity, made ours the matter of much public talk and wonder. But the true opening of her case and mine, and the many strange occurrences which brought it to pass, would take away the wonder of her friends and mine that knew us; and the notice of it would much conduce to the understanding of some other passages of our lives; yet wise

[a] Life of Mrs. Baxter, p. 1—3.

[b] As nearly as I can calculate from incidental circumstances, the age of Mrs. Baxter, at the time of her marriage, must have been about twenty-two or twenty-three. Her husband, as has already been stated, was in his forty-seventh year. There was some room, therefore, for remark on the disparity of their ages.

friends, by whom I am advised, think it better to omit such personal particularities, at least at this time. Both in her case and mine there was much extraordinary, which it doth not concern the world to be acquainted with. From the first thoughts of it, many changes and stoppages intervened, and long delays, till I was silenced and ejected; and so being separated from my old pastoral charge, which was enough to take up all my time and labour, some of my dissuading reasons were then over. At last, on September 10, 1662, we were married in Bennet-Fink church, by Mr. Samuel Clark, having been before contracted by Mr. Simeon Ash, both in the presence of Mr. Henry Ashurst and Mrs. Ash.

"She consented to these conditions of our marriage: first, that I should have nothing that before our marriage was hers; that I who wanted no earthly supplies, might not seem to marry her for covetousness. Secondly, that she would so alter her affairs, that I might be entangled in no lawsuits. Thirdly, that she would expect none of my time which my ministerial work should require.

"When we were married, her sadness and melancholy vanished; counsel did something to it, and contentment something; and being taken up with our household affairs did somewhat. We lived in inviolated love, and mutual complacency, sensible of the benefit of mutual help, nearly nineteen years. I know not that ever we had any breach in point of love, or point of interest, save only that she somewhat grudged that I had persuaded her for my quietness to surrender so much of her estate, to the disabling her from helping others so much as she earnestly desired.

"But that even this was not from a covetous mind, is evident by these instances. Though her portion, which was two thousand pounds beside what she gave up, was by ill debtors two hundred pounds lost in her mother's time, and two hundred pounds after, before her marriage; and all she had, reduced to about one thousand six hundred and fifty pounds, yet she never grudged at any thing that the poverty of debtors deprived her of." [c]

The married life of Baxter, owing to the state of the times, was a very unsettled one. During a great part of it, he might literally be said "to have had no certain dwelling-place." They

[c] Life of Mrs. Baxter, pp. 49—53.

first took a house in Moorfields, then they removed to Acton; after that to another there; and after that, he says, "we were put to remove to one of the former again; and after that to divers others in another place and county." "The women," he quietly remarks, "have most of that sort of trouble, but my wife easily bore it all."

We shall have occasion to speak of Mrs. Baxter again; in the mean time, we must return to the more public events of her husband's life and times. Referring to the statement already given of the causes and immediate consequences of the act of uniformity, he thus proceeds in his personal narrative.

"Having got past Bartholomew's day, I proceed in the history of the consequent calamities. When I was absent, resolving to meddle in such businesses no more, Mr. Calamy and the other ministers of London who had acquaintances at court, were put in hope the king would grant that by way of indulgence, which was formerly denied them; and that before the act was passed, it might be provided that the king should have power to dispense with such as deserved well of him in his restoration, or whom he pleased: but all was frustrated. After this, they were told that the king had power himself to dispense in such cases, as he did with the Dutch and French churches, and some kind of petition they drew up to offer the king: but when they had done it, they were so far from procuring their desires, that there fled abroad grievous threatenings against them, that they should incur a premunire for such a bold attempt. When they were drawn to it at first, they did it with much hesitancy, and they worded it so cautiously, that it extended not to the Papists. Some of the Independents presumed to say, that the reason why all our addresses for liberty had not succeeded, was because we did not extend it to the Papists; that for their parts, they saw no reason why the Papists should not have liberty of worship as well as others; and that it was better for them to have it, than for all of us to go without it.[d] But the Presbyterians still answered, that the king might himself do what he pleased; and if his wisdom thought meet to give liberty to the Papists, let the Papists petition for it as we did for ours; but if it were expected that we should be forced to

[d] It is gratifying to find that such were the opinions of some of the Independents of this time. It shows, that correct views of religious liberty were still to be found in that body, though much can be said in vindication of the conduct of the Presbyterians.

become petitioners for liberty to Popery, we should never do it, whatever be the issue; nor should it be said to be our work.

"On the 26th December, 1662, the king sent forth a declaration, expressing his purpose to grant some indulgence or liberty in religion, with other matters, not excluding the Papists, many of whom had deserved so well of him. When this came out, the ejected ministers began to think more confidently of some indulgence to themselves. Mr. Nye, also, and some other of the Independents, were encouraged to go to the king, and, when they came back, told us, that he was now resolved to give them liberty. On the second of January, Mr. Nye came to me, to treat about our owning the king's declaration, by returning him thanks for it; when I perceived that it was designed that we must be the desirers or procurers of it; but I told him my resolution to meddle no more in such matters, having incurred already so much hatred and displeasure by endeavouring unity. The rest of the ministers also had enough of it, and resolved that they would not meddle; so that Mr. Nye and his brethren thought it partly owing to us that they missed their intended liberty. But all were averse to have any thing to do with the indulgence or toleration of the Papists, thinking it at least unfit for them." [e]

However we may be disposed to blame the conduct of the Nonconformists towards the Roman Catholics on this occasion, great allowance must be made for them, considering the circumstances in which they were placed. No favour shown by the court to the Catholics was intended to operate beneficially on the Nonconformists. It was not love for liberty, but the desire to promote arbitrary power, that dictated all the measures which then seemed to confer common privileges on Catholics and Protestant dissenters. All the leanings of the court were in favour of a system which was not less inimical to constitutional freedom than it was opposed to the interests of true religion. On these accounts, the Nonconformists were willing to endure temporary privations and persecutions rather than, through impatience to get rid of them, perpetuate the civil and religious degradation of the country; which would certainly follow on the establishment of Popery.

The personal narrative of Baxter abounds with notices, more or less in extent and interest, of numerous Confessors among the ejected ministers. To introduce them all, would

[e] Life, part ii. pp. 429, 430.

be impracticable within the limits of this work. But were they entirely omitted, injustice would be done to the memory of those holy men, who suffered for conscience' sake; and an imperfect impression would be left of the state of the period. I have already introduced statesmen and politicians; soldiers and churchmen. I must now make room for Baxter's sketch of two Nonconformists, who died shortly after the enforcement of the act.

"Good old Simeon Ash was buried on the eve of Bartholomew day, and went seasonably to heaven at the very time when he was to be cast out of the church. He was one of our oldest Nonconformists; a Christian of primitive simplicity; not made for controversy, nor inclined to disputes, but of a holy life, a cheerful mind, and of a fluent elegancy in prayer; full of matter and excellent words. His ordinary speech was holy and edifying. Being much confined by the gout, and having a good estate and a very good wife, inclined to entertainments and liberality, his house was very much frequented by ministers. He was always cheerful, without profuse laughter or levity: never troubled with doubtings of his interest in Christ, but tasting the continual love of God, was much disposed to the communicating of it to others, and the comforting of dejected souls. His eminent sincerity made him exceedingly loved and honoured; insomuch that Mr. Gataker, Mr. Whittaker, and others, the most excellent divines of London, when they went to God, desired him to preach their funeral sermons. He was zealous for bringing in the king. Having been chaplain to the Earl of Manchester in the wars, he fell under the obloquy of the Cromwellians, for crossing their designs. He wrote to Colonel Sanders, Colonel Barton, and others in the army, when Monk came in to engage them for the king.

"Having preached his lecture in Cornhill, being heated, he caught cold in the vestry, and thinking it would prove but one of his old fits of the gout, he went to Highgate, where it turned to a fever. He died as he lived, in great consolation, and cheerful exercise of faith, molested with no fears or doubts discernible; exceedingly glad of the company of his friends, and greatly encouraging all about him with his joyful expressions in respect of death and his approaching change; so that no man could seem to be more fearless of it. When he had, towards the last, lain speechless for some time, as soon as I came to him, gladness so excited his spirits, that he spake joyfully and freely of his going to God, to those about him. I staid with him his

ast evening, till we had long expected his change, being speechless all that day; and in the night he departed.[f]

"On the first of January following was buried good Mr. James Nalton, another minister of primitive sincerity: a good linguist, a zealous, excellent preacher, commonly called the *weeping prophet*, because his seriousness oft expressed itself by tears; of a most holy, blameless life; and though learned, greatly averse to controversy and dispute. In almost all things he was like Mr. Ash, except his natural temper, and the influence it had upon his soul; both of them so composed of humility, piety, and innocence, that no enemy of godliness that knew them had a word to say against them. They were scorned as Puritans, like their brethren, but escaped all the particular exceptions and obloquy which many others underwent. But as one was cheerful, so the other was from his youth surprised with violent fits of melancholy once in every few years; which, though it distracted him not, yet kept him, till it was over, in a most despondent state. In his health he was over humble, and had too mean thoughts of himself and all that was his own, and never put out himself among his brethren into any employment which had the least show of ostentation. Less than a year before his death, he fell into a grievous fit of melancholy, in which he was so confident of his gracelessness, that he usually cried out 'O, not one spark of grace, not one good desire or thought! I can no more pray than a post. If an angel from heaven would tell me that I have true grace, I would not believe him.' And yet at that time did he pray very well; and I could demonstrate his sincerity so much to him in his desires and life, that he had not a word to say against it, but yet was harping still on the same string, and would hardly be persuaded that he was melancholy. It pleased God to recover him from this fit, and shortly after he confessed that what I said was true, that his despair was all the effect of melancholy; and rejoiced much in God's deliverance. Shortly after this came out the Bartholomew Act, which cast him out of his place and ministry, and his heart being troubled with the sad case of the church, and the multitude of ministers cast out and silenced, and at his own unserviceableness, it roused his melancholy, which began also to work with some fears of want and his family's distress; all which cast him so low, that the violence

[f] Mr. Ash was one of the ministers engaged at the Savoy conference, but personally took little part in the discussion.

of it wore him away like a true marasmus. So that without any other disease, but mere melancholy, he consumed to death, continuing still his sad despondency and self-condemning views. By which it appeareth how little judgment is to be made of a man's condition by his melancholy apprehensions, or the sadness of his mind at death; and in what a different manner men of the same eminency in holiness and sincerity may go to God. Which I have the rather showed by the instance of those two saints, than whom this age hath scarce produced and set up a pair more pious, humble, just, sincere, laborious in their well-performed work, unblamable in their lives, not meddling with state matters, nor secular affairs, and therefore well spoken of by all." [g]

Such is a specimen of the men, whom the leaders of the church of England thought it needful to eject from the office of the ministry, because they could not submit to the exercise of an unrighteous authority. Such were some of the fathers of Nonconformity. The church and the world were not worthy of them, but they were counted worthy not only to believe, but also to suffer for the sake of Christ; and their names will be held in everlasting remembrance.

The intolerable hardships which many excellent men were called to endure, it is not possible fully to exhibit. They were harassed and tormented by all sorts of interferences, even when they could escape fines and imprisonment. The following may be regarded as a specimen.

"As we were forbidden to preach, so we were vigilantly watched in private, that we might not exhort one another, or pray together; and, as I foretold them oft, how they would use us when they had silenced us, every meeting for prayer was called a dangerous meeting for sedition, or a conventicle at least. I will now give but one instance of their kindness to myself. One Mr. Beale, in Hatton Garden, having a son, his only child, who being long sick of a dangerous fever was brought so low that the physicians thought he would die, desired a few friends, of whom I was one, to meet at his house to pray for him. Because it pleased God to hear our prayers, and that very night to restore him; his mother shortly after falling sick of a fever, we were desired to meet to pray for her recovery, the last day when she was near to death. Among those who were to be there, it

[g] Life, part ii. p. 430, 431.

fell out that Dr. Bates and I did fail them, and could not come; but it was known at Westminster, that we were appointed to be there, whereupon two justices of the peace were procured from the distant parts of the town, one from Westminster and one from Clerkenwell, to come with the parliament's serjeant at arms to apprehend us. They came in the evening, when part of the company were gone. There were then only a few of their kindred, beside two or three ministers to pray. They came upon them into the room where the gentlewoman lay ready to die, drew the curtains, and took some of their names; but, missing their prey, returned disappointed. What a joy would it have been to them that reproached us as Presbyterian, seditious schismatics, to have found but such an occasion as praying with a dying woman, to have laid us up in prison! Yet, that same week, there was published, a witty, malicious invective against the silenced ministers; in which it was affirmed, that Dr. Bates and I were at Mr. Beale's house, such a day, keeping a conventicle. The liar had so much extraordinary modesty as, within a day or two, to print a second edition, in which those words, so easy to be disproved, were left out. Such eyes were every where then lifted upon us."[h]

In the beginning of June, 1663, the old, peaceable archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Juxon, died; and was succeeded by Dr. Gilbert Sheldon, bishop of London. Juxon was a very respectable prelate, and worthy of the character which is given him by Baxter. His conduct during the trying period of the civil wars, exhibited great moderation. He attended Charles I. on the scaffold, and received his last commands in the emphatical word, "REMEMBER." At the Restoration, he was made archbishop of Canterbury; and crowned Charles II.; by whom he appears to have been not greatly respected. He seems to have been an amiable man, but had no great energy of mind. Sheldon was his superior for learning and talents; dexterous in business, and a thorough courtier; but more of a politician than is consistent with integrity of character and religious principle. He was an implacable enemy of the Nonconformists.

"About these times, the talk of liberty to the silenced ministers, for what end, I know not, was revived again, and we were blamed by many that we had never once petitioned the parliament; for which we had sufficient reasons. It was said, that they were resolved to grant us either an indulgence by way

[h] Life, part ii. p. 431, 432.

of dispensation, or a comprehension by some additional act; taking in all that could conform in some particular points. Hereupon there was great talk about the question, whether the way of indulgence or the way of comprehension was the more desirable. It was debated as seriously, as if, indeed, such a thing as one of them had been expected. And parliament men themselves persuaded us that it would be done.

"For my own part, I meddled but little with any such business, since the failing of that which incurred so much displeasure: and the rather, because though the brethren commissioned with me stuck to me as to the cause, yet they were not forward enough to bear their part of the ungrateful management, nor of the consequent displeasure. But yet, when an honourable person was earnest with me, to give him my judgment, whether the way of indulgence or comprehension was the more desirable, that he might discern which way to go in parliament himself, I gave him my mind, though I thought it was to little purpose.[1]

"Instead of indulgence and comprehension, on the last day of June, 1663, the bill against private meetings for religious exercises passed the House of Commons, and shortly after was made a law. The sum of it was, 'that every person above sixteen years old, who should be present at any meeting under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion, in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England, where there are five persons more than the household, shall, for the first offence, by a justice of peace be recorded, and sent to jail three months, till he pay five pounds; and, for the second offence, six months, till he pay ten pounds; and the third time, being convicted by a jury, shall be banished to some of the American plantations, excepting New England or Virginia.' The calamity of the act, beside the main matter, was, that it was made so ambiguous, that no man that ever I met with could tell what was a violation of it, and what not; not knowing what was allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England in families, because the liturgy meddleth not with families; and among the diversity of family practice, no man knoweth what to call the practice of the church. Too much power was given to the justices of the peace to record a man an offender without a jury, and if he did it carelessly, we were without any remedy, seeing he was made a

[1] Life, part ii. p. 433.

judge. According to the plain words of the act, if a man did but preach and pray, or read some licensed book, and sing psalms, he might have more than four present, because these are allowed by the practice of the church in the church; and the act seemeth to grant an indulgence for place and number, so be it the quality of the exercise be allowed by the church; which must be meant publicly, because it meddleth with no private exercise. But when it came to the trial, these pleas with the justices were vain: for if men did but pray, it was taken for granted, that it was an exercise not allowed by the church of England, and to jail they went.

"And now came the people's trial, as well as the ministers'. While the dangers and sufferings lay on the ministers alone, the people were very courageous, and exhorted them to stand it out and preach till they went to prison. But when it came to be their own case, they were venturous till they were once surprised and imprisoned; but then their judgments were much altered, and they that censured ministers before as cowardly, because they preached not publicly, whatever followed, did now think that it was better to preach often in secret to a few, than but once or twice in public to many; and that secrecy was no sin, when it tended to the furtherance of the work of the Gospel, and to the church's good. The rich especially were as cautious as the ministers. But yet their meetings were so ordinary, and so well known, that it greatly tended to the jailers' commodity.

"The people were in a great strait, those especially who dwelt near any busy officer, or malicious enemy. Many durst not pray in their families, if above four persons came in to dine with them. In a gentleman's house, where it was ordinary for more than four visitors, neighbours, messengers, or one sort or other, to be most ro many days at dinner with them, many durst not then go to prayer, and some scarcely durst crave a blessing on their meat, or give God thanks for it. Some thought they might venture if they withdrew into another room, and left the strangers by themselves: but others said, it is all one if they be in the same house, though out of hearing, when it cometh to the judgment of the justices. In London, where the houses are contiguous, some thought if they were in several houses and heard one another through the wall or a window, it would avoid the law: but others said, it is all in vain whilst the justice is judge whether it was a meeting or no. Great lawyers

said, if you come on a visit or business, though you be present at prayer or sermon, it is no breach of the law, because you met not *on pretence of a religious exercise:* but those that tried them said, such words are but wind, when the justices come to judge you.

"And here the Quakers did greatly relieve the sober people for a time; for they were so resolute, and so gloried in their constancy and sufferings, that they assembled openly at the Bull and Mouth, near Aldersgate, and were dragged away daily to the common jail; and yet desisted not, but the rest came the next day, nevertheless: so that the jail at Newgate was filled with them. Abundance of them died in prison, and yet they continued their assemblies still. They would sometimes meet only to sit still in silence, when, as they said, the Spirit did not move them: and it was a great question, whether this silence was a religious exercise not allowed by the liturgy, &c. Once, upon some such reasons as these, when they were tried at the sessions, in order to a banishment, the jury acquitted them; but were grievously threatened for it. After that, another jury did acquit them, and some of them were fined and imprisoned for it. But thus the Quakers so employed Sir K. B., and the other searchers and prosecutors, that they had the less leisure to look after the meetings of soberer men; which was much to their present ease.[k]

"The divisions, or rather the censures of the nonconforming people, against their ministers and one another, began now to increase; which was long foreseen, but could not be avoided. I that had incurred so much the displeasure of the prelates, and all their party, by pleading for the peace of the Nonconformists, did fall under more of their displeasure than any one man beside, as far as I could learn. With me they joined Dr. Bates, because we went to the public assemblies, and also to the common-prayer, even at the beginning of it. Not that they thought worse of us than of others, but that they thought our example would do more harm; for I must bear them witness, that in the midst of all their censures of my judgment and actions, they never censured my affections and intentions, nor

[k] Had there been more of the same determined spirit among others, which the Friends displayed, the sufferings of all parties would sooner have come to an end. The government must have given way, as the spirit of the country would have been effectually roused. The conduct of the Quakers was infinitely to their honour.

abated their charitable estimation of me in the main. Of the leading prelates, I had so much favour in their hottest indignation, that they thought what I did was only in obedience to my conscience. So that I see by experience, that he who is impartially and sincerely for truth, and peace, and piety, against all factions, shall have his honesty acknowledged by the several factions, whilst his actions, as cross to their interest, are detested: whereas, he that joineth with one of the factions, shall have both his person and actions condemned by the other, though his party may applaud both." [1]

That Baxter acted conscientiously, no doubt can be entertained; and it must have been a comfort to him, to enjoy the testimony of a good conscience amidst the conflict through which he was called to pass. But we cannot be surprised that his conduct troubled and offended both churchmen and dissenters, even while they gave him credit for integrity. Few could enter into his numerous, and often wire-drawn distinctions; sometimes, even with all his acuteness, they were founded on a mistaken view of the case. The attempt to meet all parties, and to reconcile them, was the vainest in which this most worthy and devoted individual ever engaged. His catholic spirit grasped and hoped for that which is reserved for happier times than his own, or than has yet blessed the church of God.

"Having lived three years and more in London, and finding it neither agree with my health nor studies, the one being brought very low and the other interrupted, and all public service being at an end, I betook myself to live in the country, at Acton, that I might set myself to writing, and do what service I could for posterity, and live as much as possibly I could out of the world. Thither I went on the 14th of July, 1663, where I followed my studies privately, in quietness, and went every Lord's-day to the public assembly, when there was any preaching or catechising, and spent the rest of the day with my family, and a few poor neighbours that came in; spending now and then a day in London. The next year, 1664, I had the company of divers godly, faithful friends that tabled with me in summer, with whom I solaced myself with much content. Having almost finished a large treatise, called 'A Christian Directory, or Sum of Practical Divinity,' that I might know whether it would be licensed for the press, I tried the licensers with a small treatise, the 'Character

[1] Life, part ii. pp. 435, 436.

of a Sound Christian, as differenced from the weak Christian and the Hypocrite.' I offered it Mr. Grig, the Bishop of London's chaplain, who had been a Nonconformist, and professed an extraordinary respect for me; but he durst not license it. Yet after, when the plague began, I sent three single sheets to the Archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain, without any name, that they might have passed unknown; but, accidentally, they knew them to be mine, and they were licensed. The one was Directions for the sick; the second was Directions for the conversion of the ungodly; and the third was Instructions for a holy life: for the use of poor families that cannot buy greater books, or will not read them." [m]

Beside these works, he wrote or published, between the time of his leaving Kidderminster and the year 1665, several considerable works, both practical and controversial. Among these were, his 'Life of Faith,' 'The Successive Visibility of the Church,' 'The Vain Religion of the Formal Hypocrite,' 'The Last Work of a Believer,' 'The Mischiefs of Self-ignorance,' his Controversy with the Bishop of Worcester about the Causes of his leaving Kidderminster, his 'Saint, or Brute,' 'Now or Never,' and 'The Divine Life.' These works, considering the public business in which he was engaged, and his various trials and changes, must have found him very full employment; and only a mind of unceasing activity, and a pen of more than ordinary dispatch, could have accomplished so much.

"March 26, 1665, being the Lord's-day, as I was preaching in a private house, where we received the Lord's supper, a bullet came in at the window among us, passed by me, and narrowly missed the head of a sister-in-law of mine that was there, but hurt none of us. We could never discover whence it came.

"In June following, an ancient gentlewoman, with her son and daughter, came four miles in her coach to hear me preach in my family, as out of special respect to me. It fell out, contrary to our custom, that we let her knock long at the door, and did not open it: and so a second time, when she had gone away and come again; and the third time she came when we had ended. She was so earnest to know when she might come again to hear me, that I appointed her a time; but before she came I had secret intelligence from one that was nigh her, that she came with a heart exceeding full of malice, resolving, if possible, to do

[m] Life, part ii. pp. 440, 441.

me what mischief she could by accusation, and so that danger was avoided."[n]

During this period, some foreign ministers of eminence, who had heard of Baxter's character and talents, and were desirous of cultivating his acquaintance and friendship, wished to engage him in correspondence. Among these were Amyrald, or Amyraut, a French Protestant minister, and professor of theology at Saumur, whose sentiments on some doctrinal points were nearly allied to those of Baxter, and Zollicoffer of Switzerland, who seems, from his letter, to have visited England, and to have been well acquainted with his writings. He was afraid, however, to answer their letters.

"The vigilant eye of malice that some had upon me, made me understand that, though no law of the land was against literary persons' correspondencies beyond the seas, nor had any divines been hindered from it, yet, it was likely to have proved my ruin, if I had but been known to answer one of their letters, though the matter had been ever so much beyond exception. So that I neither answered this nor any other, save only by word of mouth to the messenger, and that but in small part. Our silencing and ejection, they would quickly know by other means, and how much the judgment of the English bishops did differ from theirs about the labours and persons of such as we.

"About this time, I thought meet to debate the case with some learned and moderate ejected ministers of London, about communicating sometimes at the parish churches in the sacrament; for they that came to common prayer, came not yet to the sacrament. They desired me to bring in my judgment and reasons in writing, which being debated, they were all of my mind in the main, that it is lawful and a duty where greater accidents preponderate not. But they all concurred unanimously in this, that if we did communicate at all in the parish churches, the sufferings of the Independents, and those Presbyterians that could not communicate there, would certainly be very much increased; which now were somewhat moderated by our concurrence with them. I thought the case very hard on both sides; that we, who were so much censured by them for going somewhat further than they, must yet omit that which else must be our duty, merely to abate their sufferings who censure us: but I resolved to forbear with them awhile, rather than any

[n] Life, part ii. p. 444.

Christian should suffer by occasion of an action of mine, seeing God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; and no duty is a duty at all times."

He thus concludes his memorials of the year 1665. The reader will be struck, as the writer of the present work is, that the year, in which he writes this page, 1828, the prayer of Baxter has been answered respecting the Corporation Act; and that for the first time during one hundred and sixty-three years, it can be said that the Protestant Dissenters of England are in possession of common rights and privileges with their fellow subjects of the established church. After such a delay in the discharge of justice, let no man be sanguine in his expectations of speedy change. After the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, under all the circumstances in which it has been accomplished, let no man despair.

"And now, after the breaches on the churches, the ejection of the ministers, and impenitency under all, wars and plague and danger of famine began at once on us. War with the Hollanders, which yet continueth; and the dryest winter, spring, and summer, that ever man alive knew, or our forefathers mention of late ages: so that the grounds were burnt like the highways, where the cattle should have fed. The meadow grounds where I lived, bare but four loads of hay, which before bare forty; the plague hath seized on the famousest and most excellent city of Christendom, and at this time nearly 8,300 die of all diseases in a week. It hath scattered and consumed the inhabitants; multitudes being dead and fled. The calamities and cries of the diseased and impoverished, are not to be conceived by those that are absent from them. Every man is a terror to his neighbour and himself: and God, for our sins, is a terror to us all. O! how is London, the place which God hath honoured with his Gospel above all places of the earth, laid low in horrors, and wasted almost to desolation by the wrath of that God, whom England hath contemned! A God-hating generation are consumed in their sins, and the righteous are also taken away as from greater evils yet to come. Yet, under all these desolations, the wicked are hardened, and cast all on the fanatics; the true dividing fanatics and sectaries are not yet humbled for former miscarriages, but cast all on the prelates and imposers; and the ignorant vulgar are stupid, and know not what use to make of any thing they feel. But thousands of the sober, prudent, faithful servants of the Lord are

mourning in secret, and waiting for his salvation; in humility and hope they are staying themselves on God, and expecting what he will do with them. From London the plague is spread through many counties, especially next London, where few places, especially corporations, are free: *which makes me oft groan, and wish that London, and all the corporations of England, would review the Corporation Act, and their own acts, and speedily repent.*

"Leaving most of my family at Acton, compassed about with the plague, at the writing of this, through the mercy of my dear God, and Father in Christ, I am hitherto in safety and comfort in the house of my dearly beloved and honoured friend, Mr. Richard Hampden, of Hampden, in Buckinghamshire, the true heir of his famous father's sincerity, piety, and devotedness to God; whose person and family the Lord preserve; honour them that honour him, and be their everlasting rest and portion."[o]

[o] Life, part ii. p. 448.

CHAPTER IX.

1665—1670.

The Plague of London—Preaching of some of the Nonconformists—The Five-Mile Act—The Fire of London—Benevolence of Ashurst and Gouge—The Fire advantagous to the Preaching of the Silenced Ministers—Conformist Clergy—More Talk about Liberty of Conscience—The Latitudinarians—Fall of Clarendon—The Duke of Buckingham—Sir Orlando Bridgman—Preaching of the Nonconformists connived at—Fresh Discussions about a Comprehension—Dr. Creighton—Ministers imprisoned—Address to the King—Nonconformists attacked from the Press—Baxter's Character of Judge Hale—Dr. Rives—Baxter sent to Prison—Advised to apply for a Habeas Corpus—Demands it from the Court of Common Pleas—Behaviour of the Judges—Discharged—Removes to Totteridge—His Works during this period—Correspondence with Owen.

In the end of the preceding chapter, we left Baxter at Hampden, moralising on the desolation of London, during the raging of the plague. Of that fearful calamity, and also of the fire, which followed soon after, he has left some additional notices, as well as of the influence of these events on the trials or enlargement of the Nonconformists.

"The number that died in London, he informs us, beside all the rest of the land, was about a hundred thousand, reckoning the Quakers, and others, that were never put in the bills of mortality.

"The richer sort removing out of the city, the greatest blow fell on the poor. At first so few of the more religious sort were taken away that, according to the mode of too many such, they began to be puffed up, and boast of the great difference which God did make; but quickly after they all fell alike. Yet not many pious ministers were taken away. I remember only three, who were all of my acquaintance.

"It is scarcely possible for people who live in a time of health and security, to apprehend the dreadful nature of that pestilence. How fearful people were thirty or forty, if not a hundred miles

from London, of any thing they bought from mercers' or drapers' shops, or of goods that were brought to them; or of any person who came to their houses! How they would shut their doors against their friends; and if a man passed over the fields, how one would avoid another as we did in the time of the wars; how every man was a terror to another![p] Oh, how sinfully unthankful are we for our quiet societies, habitations, and health!

"Not far from the place where I sojourned, at Mrs. Fleetwood's, three ministers of extraordinary worth were together in one house, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Samuel Cradock, and Mr. Terry, men of singular judgment, piety, and moderation. The plague came into the house where they were, and one person dying of it, caused many, that they knew not of, earnestly to pray for their deliverance; and it pleased God that no other person died.

"One great benefit the plague brought to the city, it occasioned the silenced ministers more openly and laboriously to preach the Gospel, to the exceeding comfort and profit of the people; insomuch, that to this day the freedom of preaching, which this occasioned, can not by the daily guards of soldiers nor by the imprisonment of multitudes be restrained. The ministers that were silenced for Nonconformity, had ever since 1662 done their work very privately and to a few; not so much through their timorousness, as their loathness to offend the king, and in hope that their forbearance might procure them some liberty, and through some timorousness of the people that would hear them. When the plague grew hot, most of the conformable ministers fled, and left their flocks in the time of their extremity; whereupon divers Nonconformists, pitying the dying and distressed people, who had none to call the impenitent to repentance, or to help men to prepare for another world,

[p] Among the places which the plague visited at a distance, was the village of Loughborough, in the county of Leicester; it there entered the house of the Rev. Samuel Shaw, the ejected minister of Long Whatton. He buried two of his children, two friends, and a servant, who had died of the distemper. Both his wife and himself were attacked, but mercifully escaped. His house was shut up for three months, none being permitted to enter it; so that he had to attend the sick himself, and afterwards to bury them in his own garden. It was in those circumstances he produced that beautiful and impressive little volume, 'The Welcome to the Plague.' It was originally a sermon, preached to his own family, and affords an admirable illustration of the power and blessedness of true religion. If the reader has not seen this little work, or another of Shaw's, 'Immanuel; or, a Discovery of True Religion,' I beg to recommend them to his attention, as among the finest specimens of the Nonconformist school of theology. The author died in 1696.—See the *Memoir prefixed to Immanuel.*

or to comfort them in their terrors, when about ten thousand died in a week, resolved that no obedience to the laws of mortal men whatsoever, could justify them in neglecting men's souls and bodies in such extremities. They, therefore, resolved to stay with the people, and to go into the forsaken pulpits, though prohibited, and to preach to the poor people before they died; also to visit the sick and get what relief they could for the poor, especially those that were shut up.

"Those who set upon this work were, Mr. Thomas Vincent, late minister in Milk-street,[q] with some strangers that came thither after they were silenced; as Mr. Chester, Mr. Janeway, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Franklin, and some others. Often those heard them one day, who were sick the next, and quickly dead. The face of death did so awaken both the preachers and the hearers, that preachers exceeded themselves in lively, fervent preaching, and the people crowded constantly to hear them. All was done with great seriousness, so that through the blessing of God, abundance were converted from their carelessness, impenitency, and youthful lusts and vanities; and religion took such a hold on many hearts, as could never afterwards be loosed.[r]

"Whilst God was consuming the people by these judgments, and the Nonconformists were labouring to save men's souls, the parliament, which sat at Oxford, whither the king removed from the danger of the plague, was busy with an act of con-

[q] Vincent published, in 1667, a work, entitled 'God's Terrible Voice in the City by Plague and Fire,' founded on these two awful calamities, both of which he had witnessed. He remained in the city, preaching with great fervour and effect during the whole time of the plague. It came into the house in which he resided, and took off three persons, but he escaped alive. The name of such a man, and of those who acted with him, deserve to be preserved in an imperishable record. He died at Hoxton, in 1671.—*Calamy*, ii. 32.

[r] 'De Foe's Journal of the Plague Year,' though written as a fiction, but yet no fiction, gives the best account of this tremendous calamity which we have. It is only to be regretted that what is fact and what is fiction, are so mingled together that it is impossible to separate them. While the description is not more terrible than the reality, and many of the narratives are probably descriptive of real occurrences, the book cannot be used as authority. There are some affecting notices of it in the 'Diary of Pepys;' and several letters are given by Ellis, in the fourth volume of his second series of 'Original Letters, illustrative of English History,' relative to it. They are by the Rev. Stephen Bing and Dr. Tillotson, and addressed to Dr. Sancroft, then dean of St. Paul's. It appears from them that the Bishop of London threatened those of his clergy who had deserted their flocks, in consequence of the plague, that if they did not return to their charges speedily, he would put others in their places.

finement to make the silenced ministers' case incomparably harder than it was bef[illegible] putting upon them a certain oath, which if they refused, they must not come, except on the road, within five miles of any city, or of any corporation, or any place that sendeth burgesses to the parliament; or of any place whereever they had been ministers, or ha[illegible] preached since the Act of Oblivion. So little did the sense of God's terrible judgments, or of the necessities of many hundred thousand ignorant souls, or the groans of the poor people for the teaching which they had lost, or the fear of the great and final reckoning, affect the hearts of the prelatists, or stop them in their way. The chief promoters of this among the clergy were said to be the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Dr. Seth Ward, the bishop of Salisbury. One of the greatest adversaries of it in the Lords' House, was the Earl of Southampton, lord treasurer of England, a man who had ever adhered to the king, but understood the interest of his country, and of humanity. It is, without contradiction, reported that he said no honest man would take that oath.[s] The Lord Chancellor Hyde, also, and the rest of the leaders of that mind and way, promoted it, and easily procured it to pass the houses, notwithstanding all that was said against it.

"By this act, the case of the ministers was made so hard, that many thought themselves obliged to break it, not only by the necessity of their office, but by a natural impossibility of keeping it, unless they should murder themselves and their families."[t]

The oath imposed on them by the act was as follows:

"I, A. B., do swear that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such commission: and that I will not, at any time, endeavour any alteration of the government, either in church or state."[u]

We are at a loss which most to be astonished at—the impiety,

[s] Burnet tells us, Southampton spoke vehemently against the bill, and said "he could take no such oath himself; for how firm soever he had always been to the church, as things were managed, he did not know but he himself might see cause to endeavour an alteration."—*Own Times*, vol. i. p. 329. Southampton was a very able man, exemplary in private life, and of invincible integrity in his public conduct. He died in 1667.

[t] Life, part iii. pp. 1—3. [u] Ibid. p. 4.

the folly, or the cruelty, of the men who could impose this oath. They could not suppose that religious men would generally take it; they must therefore have contemplated the infliction of the most grievous wrongs on some of the best friends of the country. It was carried through the House of Lords chiefly by the influence of the archbishop and the lord chancellor. In the House of Commons, an unsuccessful attempt was made to insert the word "legally" before "commissioned;" but the bill passed without a division, the lawyers declaring that the word "legally" must be understood. Some Nonconformist ministers took the oath on this construction: but the far greater number refused. Even if they could have borne the solemn assertion of the principles of passive-obedience in all possible cases, their consciences revolted from a pledge to endeavour no kind of alteration in church or state; an engagement, in its extended sense, irreconcilable with their religious principles, and with the civil duties of Englishmen. Yet, to quit the towns where they had long been connected, and where alone they had friends and disciples, for a residence in country villages, was an exclusion from the ordinary means of subsistence. The Church of England had, doubtless, her provocations; but she made retaliation much more than commensurate to the injury. No severity comparable to this cold-blooded persecution had been inflicted by the late powers, even in the ferment and fury of a civil war.[x]

Baxter submitted the consideration of the oath to his kind friend, Serjeant Fountain, with a series of queries, to which that learned person replied at considerable length. The answers, however, could by no means satisfy Baxter that it was lawful to take the oath the reasons for which he assigns with his usual minuteness.

"The act which imposed this oath," he says, "openly accused the nonconformable ministers, or some of them, of seditious doctrine, and such heinous crimes, wherefore, when it first came out, I thought that at such an accusation no innocent persons should be silent; especially when Papists, strangers, and posterity, may think that a recorded statute is a sufficient history to prove us guilty; and the concernments of the Gospel, and our callings, and men's souls, are herein touched. I therefore drew up a profession of our judgment about the case of loyalty, and obedience to kings and governors; and the reasons why we re-

[x] Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. ii. p. 474.

fused the oath. But reading it to Dr. Seaman, and some others wiser than myself, they advised me to cast it by, and to bear all in silent patience; because it was not possible to do it so fully and sincerely but that the malice of our adversaries would make an ill use of it, and turn it all against ourselves: and the wise statesmen laughed at me for thinking that reason would be regarded by such men as we had to do with, and would not exasperate them the more."[y]

Sheldon determined to execute the act as strictly as possible, and therefore, on the 7th of July, 1665, orders were issued to the several bishops in the province of Canterbury, requiring among other things, a return of the names of all the ejected ministers, with their place of abode, and manner of life. The returns of the several bishops are said to be still preserved in the Lambeth library.[z]

"After this, the ministers finding the pressure of this act so heavy, and the loss likely to be so great to cities and corporations, some of them studied how to take the oath lawfully. Dr. Bates being much in favour with the Lord Keeper Bridgman,[a] consulted with him, who promised to be at the next sessions, and there, on the bench, to declare openly that, by *endeavour*, to change the church government, was meant *unlawful endeavour* which satisfying him, he thereby satisfied others, who, to avoid the imputation of seditious doctrine, were willing to go as far as they durst; and so twenty ministers came in at the sessions, and took the oath."[b]

Dr. Bates' reasons for taking the oath may be seen in the letter which he addressed to Baxter on the occasion;[c] but the reasoning of Baxter seems fully to justify his declining to do so. The oath was a wicked device, to ensnare and injure the ministers; and those of them who took it, even with the Lord Keeper Bridgman's explanation, that *only* seditious endeavours were

[y] Life, part iii. p. 13. [z] Calamy, vol. i. p. 313.

[a] Sir Orlando Bridgman was a son of the Bishop of Chester. Soon after the Restoration, he was made lord chief baron of the Exchequer, and, a few months after, was removed to the Common Pleas, in which he presided with great dignity. He possessed sufficient integrity for the high office of lord keeper, but not sufficient firmness for the difficulties which belonged to it. He is said, however, to have lost the office for refusing to affix the seal to the king's unconstitutional declaration for liberty of conscience. He wished, as will afterwards be seen, the comprehension of the Dissenters in the church, but was opposed to the toleration of Popery.

[b] Life, part iii. p. 13. [c] Ibid. p. 14.

meant, seem not to have added to their reputation among the people.

"The plague which began at Acton, July 29, 1665, having ceased on the first of the following March, I returned home, and found the church-yard like a ploughed field, with graves, and many of my neighbours dead; but my house, near the church-yard, uninfected, and that part of my family which I left there all safe, through the great mercy of God, my merciful protector.

"On the second of September, 1666, after midnight, London was set on fire; next day the Exchange was burnt, and, in three days, almost all the city within the walls, and much without them. The season had been exceeding dry before, and the wind in the east when the fire began. The people having none to conduct them aright, could do nothing to resist it, but stand and see their houses burn without remedy, the engines being presently out of order, and useless. The streets were crowded with people and carts, to carry away what goods they could get out; they that were most active, and befriended by their wealth, got carts and saved much, and the rest lost almost all. The loss in houses and goods is scarcely to be valued, and among the rest, the loss of books was an exceeding great detriment to the interests of piety and learning. Mostly all the booksellers in St. Paul's Church-yard brought their books into vaults under St. Paul's church, where it was thought almost impossible that fire should come. But the church itself taking fire, the exceeding weight of the stones falling down, did break into the vault, and let in the fire, and they could not come near to save the books. The library of Sion college was burned, and most of the libraries of ministers, conformable and nonconformable, in the city; with the libraries of many Nonconformists of the country, which had lately been brought up to the city. I saw the half-burnt leaves of books near my dwelling at Acton, six miles from London; but others found them near Windsor, twenty miles distant.

"At last the seamen taught them to blow up some of the houses with gunpowder, which stopped the fire, though in some places it stopped as wonderfully as it had proceeded, without any known cause. It stopped at Holborn-bridge, and near St. Dunstan's church, in Fleet-street; at St. Sepulchre's church, when the church was burnt; at Christ's church, when it was burnt; and near Aldersgate and Cripplegate, and other

places at the city wall. In Austin-Friars, the Dutch church stopped it, and escaped; in Bishopsgate-street, and Leadenhall-street, and Fenchurch-street, in the midst of the streets it stopped short of the Tower: and all beyond the river, escaped.

"Thus was the best, and one of the fairest cities in the world turned into ashes and ruins in three days' space, with many scores of churches, and the wealth and necessaries of the inhabitants. It was a sight which might have given any man a lively sense of the vanity of this world, and of all its wealth and glory, and of the future conflagration, to see the flames mount towards heaven, and proceed so furiously without restraint; to see the streets filled with people so astonished that many had scarcely sense left them to lament their own calamity; to see the fields filled with heaps of goods, costly furniture, and household stuff, while sumptuous buildings, warehouses, and furnished shops and libraries, &c., were all on flames, and none durst come near to secure any thing; to see the king and nobles ride about the streets, beholding all these desolations, and none could afford the least relief; to see the air, as far as could be beheld, so filled with the smoke, that the sun shined through it with a colour like blood; yea, even when it was setting in the west, it so appeared to them that dwelt on the west side of the city. But the dolefullest sight of all was afterwards, to see what a ruinous, confused place the city was, by chimneys and steeples only standing in the midst of cellars and heaps of rubbish; so that it was hard to know where the streets had been; and dangerous, for a long time, to pass through the ruins, because of vaults, and fire in them. No man that seeth not such a thing can have a right apprehension of the dreadfulness of it."[d]

Baxter seems to have been fully convinced that the fire was caused by the emissaries of Popery. In this belief he was not alone; and many circumstances afforded some ground at the time for entertaining it.[e] It is highly probable, however, notwithstanding the testimony of "London's tall pillar," that it was a groundless prejudice, excited by hatred of the Catholics, and the apprehensions of danger from them with which

[d] Life, part i. pp. 98—100. Pepys has preserved some interesting memorials of this second dire calamity which befell the city of London within two years. Calamy, then drooping, was driven through the ruins, after the fire had been extinguished, and it is said was so affected by the sight, that he went home and never left his house again till he died, which was shortly after. —*Calamy*, vol. ii. p. 7.

[e] See 'State Trials,' vol. vi.; Burnet, i. pp. 336—341; Hallam, vol. ii. 512.

multitudes were then haunted. Among the individuals who distinguished themselves by their exertions to relieve the distresses occasioned by this frightful calamity, were Mr. Henry Ashurst and Mr. Gouge. Baxter bears the following honourable testimony to their benevolent exertions.

"The most famous person in the city, who purposely addicted himself to works of mercy, was my very dear friend Mr. Henry Ashurst, a draper, a man of the primitive sort of Christians for humility, love, blamelessness, meekness, doing good to all as he was able, especially needy, silenced ministers, to whom, in Lancashire alone, he allowed one hundred pounds per annum; and in London was most famous for their succour and for doing hurt to none. His care was now to solicit the rich abroad, for the relief of the poor, honest Londoners. Mr. Thomas Gouge, the silenced minister of Sepulchre's parish, son to Dr. William Gouge, was such another man, who made works of charity a great part of the business of his life: he was made the treasurer of a fund collected for this purpose. Once a fortnight they called a great number of the needy together to receive their alms. I went once with Mr. Ashurst to his meeting to give them an exhortation and counsel, as he gave them alms, and saw more cause than I was sensible of before, to be thankful to God, that I never much needed relief from others.

"It was not the least observable thing in the time of the fire, and after it, considering the late wars, the multitude of disbanded soldiers, and the great grief and discontent of the Londoners for the silencing and banishing of their pastors, that there were heard no passionate words of discontent, or dishonour against their governors; even when their enemies had so often accused them of seditious inclinations, and when extremity might possibly have made them desperate.

"Some good, however, rose out of all these evils: the churches being burnt, and the parish ministers gone, for want of places and maintenance, the Nonconformists were now more resolved than ever to preach till they were imprisoned. Dr. Manton had his rooms full in Covent Garden; Mr. Thomas Vincent, Mr. Thomas Doolittle, Dr. Samuel Annesly, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Janeway at Rotherhithe, Mr. Chester, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Nathaniel Vincent, Dr. Jacomb in the Countess of Exeter's house, and Mr. Thomas Watson, &c., all kept their meetings very openly, and prepared large rooms, and some of them plain chapels, with pulpits, seats, and

galleries, for the reception of as many as could come. The people's necessity was now unquestionable. They had none other to hear, save in a few churches that would hold no considerable part of them; so that to forbid them to hear the Nonconformists, was all one as to forbid them all public worship; to forbid them to seek heaven when they had lost almost all that they had on earth; to take from them their spiritual comforts, after all their outward comforts were gone. They thought this a species of cruelty so barbarous, as to be unbeseeming any man who would not own himself to be a devil. But all this little moved the ruling prelates, saving that shame restrained them from imprisoning the preachers so hotly and forwardly as before. The Independents also set up their meetings more openly than formerly. Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Caryl, Mr. Barker, Dr. Owen, Mr. Philip Nye, and Dr. Thomas Goodwin, who were their leaders, came to the city. So that many of the citizens went to those meetings called private, more than went to the public parish churches.

"At the same time it also happily fell out that the parish churches which were left standing had the best and ablest of the Conformists in them; especially Dr. Stillingfleet, Dr. Tillotson, Mr. White, Dr. Outram, Dr. Patrick, Mr. Gifford, Dr. Whitchcot, Dr. Horton, Mr. Nest, &c. So that the moderate class of the citizens heard either sort in public and private indifferently; whilst those on the one extreme reproached all men's preaching save their own, as being seditious conventicles; and those on the other extreme would hear none that did conform; or if any heard them, they would not join in the common prayers or the sacraments."[f]

Baxter's account of these Conformists is creditable to his candour, and shows his willingness to do justice to men of all descriptions. The individuals whom he mentions were doubtless men highly respectable both for character and talents; but they were the principal means of introducing into the pulpits of the established church, that cold, inaccurate, and imperfect mode of preaching the Gospel which characterised even the respectable part of the clergy for more than a century. In the writings of Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and men like them, the leading doctrines, such as the Trinity, the atonement of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, &c., are clearly stated; with much important argument on the truth of Christianity, and the duty of all to

[f] Life, part iii. pp. 17—19.

receive and obey it. But in vain do wel ook to their discourses, with those of their successors, for correct and striking views of the grace of the Gospel, or of justification by faith alone; and much less do we find warm and pungent appeals to the conscience and the heart. They were afraid of being thought puritanical, and enthusiastic. They studied to reconcile the world to the Gospel, by modifying its statements, and endeavouring to meet, by cautious approaches, the enmity of the human heart to Christ and godliness. The effect of this style of preaching has been exceedingly injurious.

"About this time, the talk of liberty of conscience was renewed: whereupon many wrote for it, especially Mr. John Humfries, and Sir Charles Wolslèy; and many wrote against it, as Dr. Perinchef, and others, mostly without names. The Conformists were now grown so hardened, as not only to do all themselves that was required of them, but also to think themselves sufficient for the whole ministerial work through the land; and not only to consent to the silencing of their brethren, but also to oppose their restitution, and write most vehemently against it, and against any toleration of them. So little do men know, when they once enter into an evil way, where they shall stop. Not that it was so with all, but with too many, especially with most of the young men, that were of pregnant wits, and ambitious minds, and set themselves to seek preferment.

"On this account, a great number of those who were called Latitudinarians began to change their temper, and to contract some malignity against those that were much more religious than themselves. At first they were only Cambridge Arminians, and some of them not so much;[e] and were much for new and free philosophy, and especially for De Cartes, and not at all for any thing ceremonious. Being not so strict in their theology or way of piety as some others, they thought that conformity was too small a matter to keep them out of the ministry. But afterwards, many of them grew into such a distaste of the weakness of many serious Christians, who would have some harsh phrases in prayer, preaching, and discourse, that thence they seemed to be out of love with their very doctrine, and their manner of worshipping God."[g]

[g] Life, part iii. pp. 19, 20. [e] The Latitudinarians spoken of by Baxter, were such men as More, Worthington, Whitchcot, Cudworth, Wilkins, mostly of Cam-

After noticing the burning of London, the loss and disgrace sustained by the country from the Dutch, who sailed up the Thames in triumph, Baxter says :—

"The parliament at last laid all upon the Lord Chancellor Hyde : and the king was content it should be so. Whereupon many speeches were made against him, and an impeachment or charge brought in against him, and vehemently urged. Among other things, it was alleged that he counselled the king to rule by an army, which many thought, bad as he was, he was the chief means of hindering. To be short, when they had first sought his life, at last it was concluded that his banishment should satisfy for all ; and so he was, by an act of parliament, banished during his life. The sale of Dunkirk to the French, and a great comely house which he had newly built, increased the displeasure that was against him : but there were greater causes which I must not name.

"It was a notable providence that this man, who had been the great instrument of state, and had dealt so cruelly with the Nonconformists, should thus, by his own friends, be cast out and banished, while those that he had persecuted were the most moderate in his cause, and many of them for him. It was a great ease that befell good people throughout the land by his dejection. For his way had been to decoy men into conspiracies, or to pretend plots, upon the rumour of which the innocent people of many counties were laid in prison ; so that no man knew when he was safe. Since then the laws have been made more and more severe, yet a man knoweth a little better what to expect, when it is by a law that he is to be tried. It is also notable that he, who did so much to make the Oxford law for banishing ministers from corporations who took not that oath,

bridge, who joined with the others of whom we have already spoken, in introducing a very inefficient mode of preaching into the established church. They endeavoured to examine all the principles of morality and religion on philosophical principles, and to maintain them by the reason of things. They declared against superstition on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other. They were attached to the constitution and forms of the church ; but moderate in their opposition to those who dissented from it. They were mostly Arminians of the Dutch school, but admitted of a considerable latitude of sentiment, both in philosophy and theology. On this account, they obtained the name which Baxter assigns to them. They were, in fact, low churchmen of Arminian principles ; moderate in piety, in sentiment, and in zeal. Some of them, it appears, gradually became (to use a phrase well understood in the northern part of the island) "fierce for moderation." See 'Burnet's Own Times,' vol. i. p. 274.

doth, in his letter from France, since his banishment, say, that he never was in favour since the parliament sat at Oxford.[h]

"Before this, the Duke of Buckingham being at the head of Clarendon's adversaries, had been overtopped by him, and was fain to hide himself, till the Dutch put us in fear. He then surrendered himself, and went prisoner to the Tower; but with such acclamations of the people, as was a great discouragement to the chancellor; the duke accordingly was quickly set at liberty. Whereupon, as the chancellor had made himself the head of the prelatical party, who were for setting up themselves by force, and suffering none that were against them; so Buckingham would now be the head of all those parties that were for liberty of conscience. The man was of no religion, but notoriously and professedly lustful; and yet of greater wit and parts, and sounder principles, as to the interests of humanity and the common good, than most lords in the court. Wherefore he countenanced fanatics and sectaries, among others, without any great suspicion, because he was known to be so far from them himself. He married the daughter and only child of Lord Fairfax, late general of the parliament's army, and became his heir hereby, yet was he far enough from his mind; though still defender of the privileges of humanity.[i]

[h] "The estrangement of the king's favour is sufficient to account for Clarendon's loss of power; but his entire ruin was rather accomplished by a strange coalition of enemies, which his virtues, or his errors and infirmities, had brought into union. The Cavaliers hated him on account of the act of indemnity, and the Presbyterians for that of uniformity. Yet the latter were not in general so eager in his prosecution as the others. A distinguished characteristic of Clarendon, had been his firmness, called, indeed, by most, pride and obstinacy, which no circumstances, no perils, seemed likely to bend. But his spirit sunk all at once with his fortune. Clinging too long to office, and cheating himself, against all probability, with a hope of his master's kindness, when he had lost his confidence, he abandoned that dignified philosophy which ennobles a voluntary retirement, that stern courage which innocence ought to inspire; and hearkening to the king's treacherous counsels, fled before his enemies into a foreign country."—*Hallam*, vol. ii. pp. 494—503. Ellis has given a letter from Charles to the Duke of Ormond, in which he assigns as the reason for depriving Clarendon of the seals, "that his behaviour and humour had grown so unsupportable to himself, and to all the world else, that he could not longer endure it."—*Original Letters*, second series, vol. iv. pp. 38—40. Clarendon deserved all that befell him; but the conduct of his royal master to him was base and ungrateful.

[i] All who are conversant with the times of Charles II., are familiar with the character of Villiers, duke of Buckingham. Gay, witty, and profligate, he was a fit servant of such a master. He was the alchemist and the philosopher, the fiddler and the poet, the mimic and the statesman. In the last capacity, Baxter seems to have had a better opinion of his principles than he was entitled to.

"When the chancellor was banished, Sir Orlando Bridgman was made lord keeper: a man who, by his becoming moderation to the Nonconformists, though a zealous patron of prelacy, got himself a good name for a time. At first, whilst the Duke of Buckingham kept up the cry for liberty of conscience, he seemed to comply with that design, to the great displeasure of the ruling prelates. But when he saw that the game would not go on, he turned as zealous the other way, and wholly served the prelatical interest; yet was he not much valued by either side, but taken for an uncertain, timorous man. High places, great business and difficulties, do so try men's abilities and their morals, that many, who in a low or middle station acquired and kept up a great name, do quickly lose it, and grow despised and reproached persons, when exaltation and trial have made them known; besides that, as in prosperous times the chief state ministers are praised, so in evil and suffering times they bear the blame of what is amiss.

"When the Duke of Buckingham came first into this high favour, he was looked on as the chief minister of state, instead of the chancellor, and showed himself openly for toleration, or liberty for all parties, in matters of God's worship. Others also then seemed to look that way, thinking that the king was for it. Whereupon those who were most against it grew into seeming discontent. The bishop of Winchester, Morley, was put out of his place, as dean of the chapel royal, and Bishop Crofts, of Hereford, who seemed then to be for moderation, was put into it. But it was not long till Crofts was either discouraged, or, as some said, upon the death of a daughter, for grief left both it and the court;[k] the Bishop of Oxford was brought into his place, and Dr. Crew, the son of that wise and pious man the Lord Crew, was made clerk of the closet.[l]

"At the same time, the ministers of London, who had ven-

[k] Burnet says, "Crofts was a warm, devout man, but of no discretion in his conduct; so he lost ground quickly. He used much freedom with the king; but it was in the wrong place, not in private, but in the pulpit."—*Own Times*, vol. i. pp. 379.

[l] Crew, who was afterwards raised to the bishoprick of Durham, was vain, ambitious, unsteady, and insincere; more compliant with all the measures of court, than any of his brethren. He was regarded, Granger says, as the grand inquisitor in the reign of James II.; in whose fate he very nearly shared, as, at the revolution, he was excepted from the act of indemnity; but he afterwards obtained a pardon through the influence chiefly of Dr. Bates.—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, pp. 137, 138.

tured to keep open meetings in their houses, and preached to great numbers contrary to the law, were, by the king's favour, connived at: so that the people went openly to hear them without fear. Some imputed this to the king's own inclination to liberty of conscience; some to the Duke of Buckingham's prevalency; and some to the Papists' influence, who were for liberty of conscience for their own interest. But others thought that the Papists were really against liberty of conscience, and did rather desire that the utmost severities might ruin the Puritans, and cause discontents and divisions among ourselves, till we had broken one another all into pieces, and turned all into such confusion as might advantage them to play a more successful game than ever toleration was likely to be. Whatever was the secret cause, it is evident that the great visible cause, was the burning of London, and the want of churches for the people to meet: it being, at the first, a thing too gross, to forbid an undone people all public worship, with too great rigour; and if they had been so forbidden, poverty had left so little to lose as would have made them desperately go on. Therefore some thought all this was to make necessity seem a *favour*.

"Whatever was the cause of the connivance, it is certain that the country ministers were so much encouraged by the boldness and liberty of those in London, that they did the like in most parts of England, and crowds of the most religiously-inclined people were their hearers. Some few got, in the way of travelling, into pulpits where they were not known, and the next day went away to another place. This, especially with the great discontents of the people, for their manifold payments, and of cities and corporations for the great decay of trade, and breaking and impoverishing of many thousands, by the burning of the city; together with the lamentable weakness and badness of great numbers of the ministers, that were put into the Nonconformists' places, did turn the hearts of most of the common people in all parts against the bishops and their ways, and inclined them to the Nonconformists, though fear restrained men from speaking what they thought, especially the richer sort.

"In January, 1668, I received a letter from Dr. Manton, that Sir John Babor told him it was the lord keeper's desire to speak with him and me, about a comprehension and toleration. On coming to London, Sir John Babor told me, that the lord keeper spake to him to bring us to him for the aforesaid end,

as he had certain proposals to offer us; that many great courtiers were our friends in the business, but that, to speak plainly, if we would carry it, we must make use of such as were for a toleration of the Papists also. He demanded how we would answer the common question, *What will satisfy you?* I answered him that other men's judgments and actions, about the toleration of the Papists, we had nothing to do with at this time; for it was no work for us to meddle in. But to this question, we were not so ignorant whom we had to do with, as to expect full satisfaction of our desires as to church affairs. The answer must be suited to the sense of his question: and if we knew their ends, what degree of satisfaction they were minded to grant, we would tell them what means are necessary to attain them. There are degrees of satisfaction, as to the number of persons to be satisfied; and there are divers degrees of satisfying the same persons. If they will take in all orthodox, peaceable, worthy ministers, the terms must be larger. If they will take in but the greater part, somewhat less and harder terms may do it. If but a few, yet less may serve: for we are not so vain as to pretend that all Nonconformists are, in every particular, of one mind.

"When we came to the lord keeper, we resolved to tell him that Sir John Babor told us his lordship desired to speak with us, lest it should be after said, that we intended, or were the movers of it; or lest it had been Sir John Babor's forwardness that had been the cause. He told us why he sent for us: that it was to think of a way of our restoration; to which end he had some proposals to offer us, which were for a comprehension for the Presbyterians, and an indulgence for the Independents and the rest. We asked him whether it was his lordship's pleasure that we should offer him our opinion of the means, or only receive what he offered to us. He told us, that he had somewhat to offer us, but we might also offer our own to him. I told him, that I did think we could offer such terms, which, while no way injurious to the welfare of any, might take in both Presbyterians and Independents, and all sound Christians, into the established ministry. He answered, that was a thing he would not have; but only a toleration for the rest; which being none of our business to debate, we desired him to consult such persons about it as were concerned in it; and so it was agreed that we should meddle with the comprehension only. A few days after he accordingly sent us his proposals.

"When we saw the proposals, we perceived that the business of the lord keeper, and his way, would make it unfit for us to debate such cases with himself; and therefore we wrote to him, requesting that he would nominate two learned, peaceable divines to treat with us, till we had agreed on the fittest terms; and that Dr. Bates might be added to us. He nominated Dr. Wilkins, who, we then found, was the author of the proposals, and of the whole business,[m] and his chaplain, Mr. Burton.[n] When we met, we tendered them some proposals of our own, and some alterations which we desired in their proposals; for they presently rejected ours, and would hear no more of them; so that we were fain to treat upon theirs alone."[o]

According to the heads of agreement which had been entered into between the parties in private, a bill was prepared for parliament by Lord Chief Justice Hale; but Bishop Wilkins, an honest and open-hearted man, having disclosed the affair to Bishop Ward, in hope of his assistance, he alarmed the bishops; who, instead of promoting the design, concerted measures to defeat it. As soon as parliament met, it was mentioned that there were rumours out of doors that a bill was to be proposed for comprehension and indulgence; on which a resolution was passed, that no man should bring such a bill into the House.[p] To crush the Nonconformists more effectually, Archbishop Shel-

[m] Bishop Wilkins was one of the best members of the episcopacy during his time. His character as a philosopher is well known; his moderation as a churchman appears from his conduct in the affair of the comprehension, which failed from no want of firmness and principle in him, but from the violence of the high-church party.

[n] Dr. Hezekiah Burton was chaplain to the lord keeper, and a person of great respectability. Beside the persons engaged in this affair mentioned by Baxter, it appears that Tillotson and Stillingfleet were also concerned in it.—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, p. 42.

[o] Life, part iii. pp. 20–24. Hallam says, "The design was to act on the principle of the declaration of 1660, so that Presbyterian ordination should pass *sub modo*. Tillotson and Stillingfleet were concerned in it. The king was at this time exasperated against the bishops for their support of Clarendon."—*Constitutional Hist.* vol. ii. p. 506.

[p] "Sir Thomas Littleton spoke in favour of the comprehension, as did Seymour and Waller; all of them enemies of Clarendon, and probably connected with the Buckingham faction: but the church party was much too strong for them. Pepys says the Commons were furious against the project: it was said, that whoever proposed new laws about religion, must do it with a rope about his neck.—January 10, 1668. This is the first instance of a triumph obtained by the church over the crown, in the House of Commons. Ralph observes upon it, 'It is not for nought that the words Church and State are so often coupled together, and that the first has so insolently usurped the precedency of the last.'"—*Hallam*, vol. ii. p. 506.

don wrote a circular letter to the bishops of his province to send him a particular account of the conventicles in their several dioceses, and of the numbers that frequented them; and whether they thought they might be easily suppressed by the magistrate.[q] When he obtained this information, he went to the king and got a proclamation to put the laws in execution against the Nonconformists, and particularly against the preachers, according to the statute which forbade their living in corporate towns.[r]

This treaty not only shared the fate of all former treaties of the same kind, but eventually increased the sufferings of the Nonconformists. It amused and occupied attention for a time, and then came to nothing. The papers given in showed how much the Nonconformists were disposed to yield for the sake of peace; but they were perpetually doomed to be first tantalized and then disappointed. The bishops, who ought to have been ministers of peace and reconciliation, were generally the means of retarding or preventing them.

"How joyfully," says Baxter, "would 1400, at least, of the nonconformable ministers of England have yielded to these terms if they could have got them! But, alas! all this labour was in vain; for the active prelates and prelatists so far prevailed, that as soon as ever the parliament met, they prevented all talk or motion of such a thing; and the lord keeper, that had called us, and set us on work, himself turned that way, and talked after as if he understood us not.

"In April, 1668, Dr. Creighton, dean of Wells, the most famous loquacious, ready-tongued preacher of the court, who was used to preach Calvin to hell, and the Calvinists to the gallows, and by his scornful revilings and jests to set the court on a laughter, was suddenly, in the pulpit, without any sickness, surprised with astonishment, worse than Dr. South, the Oxford orator, had been before him. When he had repeated a sentence over and over, he was so confounded that he could go no further at all, and was fain, to all men's wonder, to come down. His case was more wonderful than almost any other man's, being not only a

[q] It is said there were private instructions given to some of the clergy, "to make the conventicles as few and inconsiderable as might be;" with which they were requested to answer the question, "Whether they thought they might be easily suppressed by the assistance of the civil magistrate?"—*The Conformist's Plea for Nonconformists*, part i. p. 40.

[r] Neal, vol. iv. pp. 385, 386. Neal gives a full detail of the nature of the terms proposed in this treaty, to which the reader may easily refer, if he wishes to enter more minutely into the subject.

fluent extempore speaker, but one that was never known to want words, especially to express his satirical or bloody thoughts.

"In July, Mr. Taverner, late minister of Uxbridge, was sentenced to Newgate, for teaching a few children at Brentford, but paying his fine prevented it. Mr. Button, of Brentford, a most humble, worthy, godly man, who never had been in orders, or a preacher, but had been canon of Christ's church, in Oxford, and orator to the University, was sent to gaol for teaching two knight's sons in his house, not having taken the Oxford oath. Many of his neighbours, of Brentford, were sent to the same prison for worshipping God in private together, where they all lay many months. I name these because they were my neighbours, but many counties had the like usage: yea, Bishop Crofts, that had pretended great moderation, sent Mr. Woodward, a worthy, silenced minister, of Herefordshire, to gaol for six months. Some were imprisoned upon the Oxford Act, and some on the Act against Conventicles.

"In September, Colonel Phillips, a courtier of the bedchamber, and my next neighbour, who spake to me fair, complained to the king of me, for preaching to great numbers; but the king put it by, and nothing was done at that time.

"About this time, Dr. Manton, being nearest the court, and of great name among the Presbyterians, and being heard by many of great quality,[s] was told by Sir John Babor that the king was much inclined to favour the Nonconformists, that an address now would be acceptable, and that the address must be a thankful acknowledgment of the clemency of his majesty's government, and the liberty which we thereby enjoy, &c. Accordingly, they drew up an address of thanksgiving, and I was invited to join in the presenting of it, but not in the penning, for I had marred their matter oft enough: but I was both sick

[s] Dr. Manton was a person of very excellent character and talents as a minister; and seems to have enjoyed a considerable portion of popularity. He had a good deal of intercourse with the king, and could number among his hearers many of the nobility. If we may attach any importance to Clarendon's joke, and a good plump portrait, we should regard Manton as a remarkably pleasant, good-tempered, easy man. Such probably he was; but he was far from being a timid, or a time-serving, courtier. On the contrary, he was a man of invincible integrity and principle, combined with great prudence, which were put to the test on various occasions in his life. He was a very voluminous preacher, as some of his published works prove. Lord Bolingbroke appears to have been, in early life, one of his hearers, who says, "He taught my youth to yawn, and prepared me to be a high churchman, that I might never hear him read or read him more." See his life, prefixed to his sermons on the 119th Psalm; Granger's Biog. Hist.; and Palmer's Noncon. Mem.

and unwilling, having been often enough employed in vain. I told them, however, only of my sickness; so Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb, and Mr. Ennis, presented it."[t]

The address of the ministers was most graciously received; and Charles on this, as on many other occasions, played the hypocrite very successfully.[u]

"But after all this," says Baxter, "we were as before. The talk of liberty did but occasion the writing many bitter pamphlets against toleration. Among others, they gathered out of mine and other men's books all that we had there said against liberty for Popery, and for Quakers railing against the ministers in open congregations, which they applied as against a toleration of ourselves; for the bare name of toleration did seem in the people's ears to serve their turn by signifying the same thing. Because we had said that men should not be tolerated to preach against Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, they would thence justify themselves for not tolerating us to preach for Jesus Christ, unless we would be deliberate liars, and use all their inventions. Those same men, who, when commissioned with us to make such alterations in the liturgy as were necessary to satisfy tender consciences, did maintain that no alteration was necessary to satisfy them, and did moreover, contrary to all our importunity, make so many new burdens of their own to be anew imposed on us, had now little to say but that they must be obeyed, because they were imposed."[x]

We cannot but sympathise with the Nonconformists in the treatment they experienced; and yet those of them who had contended for a limited toleration, were scarcely entitled to complain when they found their own weapons turned against themselves. The parties who did so, however, had no great ground for boasting, for the doctrine of toleration they neither understood nor acted on, except while they were themselves tolerated. Among those who distinguished themselves in writing against the ministers, were, Dr. Patrick in his 'Friendly Debate between a Conformist and a Nonconformist,' which was answered by several writers; and Samuel Parker, whose 'Ecclesiastical

[t] Life, part iii. p. 36.

[u] Dr. Manton, in a letter to Baxter, gives him an account of the reception which they experienced from his majesty, and of the reference which Charles made to his preaching at Acton; the popularity of which seems not to have been acceptable to the higher powers.—*Life*, part iii. p. 37.

[x] Life, part iii. pp. 38, 39.

Polity' called forth the weight of Owen's displeasure, and the pungency of Marvel's wit. But the controversial affairs of the period, we must defer to a subsequent part of this work, and return to Baxter's narrative.

"While I lived at Acton, as long as the act against conventicles was in force, though I preached to my family, few of the town came to hear me; partly because they thought it would endanger me, and partly for fear of suffering themselves, but especially because they were an ignorant poor people, and had no appetite for such things. When the act expired, there came so many, that I wanted room; and when once they had come and heard, they afterwards came constantly; insomuch, that in a little time, there was a great number of them, who seemed very seriously affected with the things they heard, and almost all the town and parish, besides abundance from Brentford and the neighbouring parishes, came; and I know not of three in the parish that were adversaries to us or our endeavours, or wished us ill."[y]

It was while residing at Acton, that Baxter first became acquainted with Sir Matthew Hale, then lord chief baron of the Exchequer, and one of the most eminent men for integrity and worth in his profession, as well as for pure and enlightened views as a Christian, whom this country has been honoured to produce. As Baxter has drawn his character at large with considerable power, the reader, I am sure, will be glad to have it placed before him.

"He was a man of no quick utterance, but spake with great reason. He was most precisely just; insomuch that, I believe, he would have lost all he had in the world rather than do an unjust act. Patient in hearing the most tedious speech which any man had to make for himself. The pillar of justice, the refuge of the subject who feared oppression, and one of the greatest honours of his majesty's government; for, with some other upright judges, he upheld the honour of the English nation, that it fell not into the reproach of arbitrariness, cruelty, and utter confusion. Every man that had a just cause, was almost past fear, if he could but bring it to the court or assize where he was judge; for the other judges seldom contradicted him. He was the great instrument for rebuilding London: for when an act was made for deciding all controversies that

[y] Life, part iii. p. 46.

hindered it, he was the constant judge, who, for nothing, followed the work, and, by his prudence and justice, removed a multitude of great impediments.

"His great advantage for innocency was, that he was no lover of riches or of grandeur. His garb was too plain; he studiously avoided all unnecessary familiarity with great persons, and all that manner of living which signifieth wealth and greatness. He kept no greater a family than myself. I lived in a small house, which, for a pleasant back opening, he had a mind to; but caused a stranger, that he might not be suspected to be the man, to know of me whether I were willing to part with it, before he would meddle with it. In that house he lived contentedly, without any pomp, and without costly or troublesome retinue or visitors; but not without charity to the poor. He continued the study of physics and mathematics still, as his great delight. He hath himself written four volumes in folio, three of which I have read, against atheism, Sadduceism, and infidelity, to prove first the Deity, and then the immortality of man's soul, and then the truth of Christianity, and the Holy Scripture, answering the infidel's objections against Scripture. It is strong and masculine, only too tedious for impatient readers. He said, he wrote it only at vacant hours in his circuits, to regulate his meditations, finding that while he wrote down what he thought on, his thoughts were the easier kept close to work, and kept in a method. But I could not persuade him to publish them.

"The conference which I had frequently with him, mostly about the immortality of the soul, and other philosophical and foundation points, was so edifying, that his very questions and objections did help me to more light than other men's solutions. Those who take none for religious, who frequent not private meetings, &c., took him for an excellently righteous, moral man: but I, who heard and read his serious expressions of the concernments of eternity, and saw his love to all good men, and the blamelessness of his life, thought better of his piety than my own. When the people crowded in and out of my house to hear, he openly showed me so great respect before them at the door, and never spake a word against it, as was no small encouragement to the common people to go on; though the other sort muttered, that a judge should seem so far to countenance that which they took to be against the law. He was a great lamenter of the extremities of the times, and of the violence

and foolishness of the predominant clergy; and a great desirer of such abatements as might restore us all to serviceableness and unity. He had got but a very small estate, though he had long the greatest practice, because he would take but little money, and undertake no more business than he could well dispatch. He often offered to the lord chancellor to resign his place, when he was blamed for doing that which he supposed was justice. He had been the learned Selden's intimate friend, and one of his executors; and because the Hobbians, and other infidels would have persuaded the world that Selden was of their mind,[z] I desired him to tell me the truth therein. He assured me that Selden was an earnest professor of the Christian faith, and so angry an adversary to Hobbes, that he hath rated him out of the room."[a]

Such is Baxter's account of this distinguished man, whose moral worth threw a glory over his high professional attainments, and rendered him an eminent blessing to his country. Unfortunately, few of the clergy were like this ornament of the law, either in religious character, or in peaceable disposition. Very different, for example, was the clergyman of the parish in which Judge Hale and Baxter resided. The conduct of this individual brought Baxter into such trouble, that I must leave him to describe both his character and his behaviour.

[z] I am at a loss to understand on what grounds the class of persons to whom Baxter refers, could claim Selden as one of them. I suspect the insinuation must have originated with the high-church party, to whose claims Selden was certainly no friend. His attack on the divine right of tithes, the *publication*, not the *doctrine* of which he retracted, gave great offence to the church. His Erastianism, in regard to church government, made him unacceptable to the Presbyterians; while his jokes, at the expense of the Westminster Assembly, of which he was a lay member, probably rendered his serious piety a little doubtful. Nothing in his writings, however, can induce any one to suppose that Selden was either infidel or sceptical in his notions of religion; but more firmness of character than he appears to have possessed, would have greatly increased the lustre of his eminent talents and profound learning.

[a] Life, part iii. pp. 47, 48. Bishop Burnet published an interesting little volume, 'The Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale,' which confirms all that Baxter has said of his illustrious friend. Burnet was not himself acquainted with Hale, but does great justice to his character. He mentions that "he held great conversation with Mr. Baxter, who was his neighbour at Acton; on whom he looked as a person of great devotion and piety, and of a very subtile and quick apprehension. Their conversation lay most in mataphysical and abstracted ideas and schemes."—p. 45. Burnet concludes his memoirs of the judge by saying, "He was one of the greatest patterns this age has afforded, whether in his private deportment as a Christian, or in his public employments either at the bar, or on the bench."—p. 128. A second edition of this life was accompanied with notes by Baxter.

"The parson of this parish was Dr. Ryves, dean of Windsor and of Wolverhampton, parson of Hasely and of Acton, chaplain in ordinary to the king, &c. His curate was a weak young man, who spent most of his time in the ale-houses, and read a few dry sentences to the people once a day. Yet, because he preached true doctrine, and I had no better to hear, I constantly heard him when he preached, and went to the beginning of the common prayer. As my house faced the church door, and was within hearing of it, those that heard me before, went with me to the church; scarcely three, that I know of, in the parish refusing. When I preached, after the public exercise, they went out of the church into my house. It pleased the doctor and parson, that I came to church and brought others with me, but he was not able to bear the sight of people crowding into my house, though they heard him also; so that though he spake me fair, and we lived in seeming love and peace while he was there, yet he could not long endure it. When I had brought the people to church to hear him, he would fall upon them with groundless reproaches; as if he had done it purposely to drive them away, and yet he thought that my preaching to them, because it was in a house, did all the mischief; though he never accused me of any thing that I spake, for I preached nothing but Christianity and submission to our superiors, faith, repentance, hope, love, humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, and obedience.

"He was the more offended, because I came not to the sacrament with him; though I communicated in the other parish churches in London and elsewhere. I was loth to offend him, by giving him the reason; which was, that he was commonly reputed a swearer, a curser, a railer, &c. In those tender times, it would have been so great an offence to the Congregational brethren, if I had communicated with him, and perhaps have hastened their sufferings who durst not do the same, that I thought it would do more harm than good."[b]

It is a pity Baxter did not put his refusal to communicate with such a man, on a better footing than merely that of giving offence to his brethren.[c] An individual acting in a manner

[b] Life, part iii. pp. 46, 47.

[c] The account which Baxter gives of the conduct of Dean Ryves corresponds accurately with the opinion which we should have formed of him from some of his writings. He was a violent royalist; and as he had suffered for his principles during the civil wars, he probably thought himself justified in retaliating on the Nonconformists. His 'Mercurius Rusticus, or the Country's Complaint of the barbarous outrages committed by the Sectaries of'

so openly profane, ought not to have been countenanced as a religious teacher by any Christian. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how Baxter could reconcile himself even to hear such a man, and, by his example, to influence others to do the same; when we reflect on his strong views of the mischief and sinfulness of countenancing ungodly ministers. His love of peace, and desire to prevent schism in the established church, were the impelling motives, which, in this instance, certainly carried him too far.

"At Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, where Ryves was dean, were abundance of Papists and violent formalists. Amongst whom was one Brasgirdle, an apothecary, who, in conference with Mr. Reynolds (an able preacher there silenced and turned out), by his bitter words tempted him into so much indiscretion as to say, that the Nonconformists were not so contemptible for number and quality as he made them; that most of the people were of their mind; that Cromwell, though an usurper, had kept up England against the Dutch; and that he marvelled he would be so hot against private meetings, when at Acton the dean suffered them at the next door. Having this advantage, Brasgirdle writeth all this, greatly aggravated, to the dean. The dean hastens away with it to the king, as if it were the discovery of treason. Mr. Reynolds is questioned, but the justices of the county to whom it was referred, upon hearing of the business, found mere imprudence heightened to a crime, and so released him. But before this could be done, the king, exasperated by the name of Cromwell, and other unadvised words, as the dean told me, bid him go to the Bishop of London from him, and bid him see to the suppression of my meeting, which was represented to him as much greater than it was. Whereupon, two justices were chosen for their turn to do it. One Ross, of Brentford, a Scotsman, and one Phillips, a steward to the Archbishop of Canterbury."[d]

In consequence of this complaint, a warrant was granted to

this late flourishing Kingdom,' contains some curious accounts of the battles, sieges, and combats, between the king's and the parliament's forces, to the year 1646. He represents the treatment of the royal party to have been, in many instances, intolerably severe, which was probably the case. His account of the treatment of the sectaries, is, I apprehend, a good deal aggravated. The 'Querela Cantabrigiensis,' which is commonly ascribed to him, is also ascribed to Dr. John Barwick.—See 'Life of Barwick,' pp. 32, 33. Dr. Ryves died in 1677, in the 81st year of his age.

[d] Life, part iii. p. 48.

bring Baxter before the justices at Brentford. After maintaining a considerable conflict with them, in which they treated him very indecorously, he was, by their mittimus, sent to Clerkenwell prison, for holding a conventicle, not having taken the Oxford oath, and refusing it when tendered to him.

"They would have given me leave to stay till Monday, before I went to gaol, if I would have promised them not to preach the next Lord's day, which I refused. This was made a heinous crime against me at the court, and it was also said that it could not be out of conscience that I preached, else why did not my conscience put me on it so long before? Whereas I had ever preached to my own family, and never once invited any one to hear me, or forbade any; so that the difference was made by the people, and not by me. If they came more at last than at first, before they had heard me, that signified no change in me. But thus must we be judged of, where we are absent, and our adversaries present; and there are many to speak against us what they please, and we are banished from cities and corporations, and cannot speak for ourselves.

"The whole town of Acton were greatly exasperated against the dean, when I was going to prison; so much so, that ever after they abhorred him as a selfish persecutor. Nor could he have devised to do more to hinder the success of his seldom preaching there; but it was his own choice,—'Let them hate me, so they fear me.'

"Thus I finally left that place, being grieved most that Satan had prevailed to stop the poor people in such hopeful beginnings of a common reformation, and that I was to be deprived of the exceeding grateful neighbourhood of the Lord Chief Baron Hale, who could scarce refrain tears when he heard of the first warrant for my appearance.

"As I went to prison, I called on Serjeant Fountain, my special friend, to take his advice; for I would not be so injurious to Judge Hale. He perused my mittimus, and, in short, advised me to seek for a *habeas corpus*, but not in the usual court (the King's Bench), for reasons known to all that knew the judges; nor yet in the Exchequer, lest his kindness to me should be an injury to Judge Hale, and so to the kingdom; but at the Common Pleas, which he said might grant it, though it is not usual.

"My greatest doubt was, whether the king would not take it ill, that I rather sought to the law than unto him; or if I sought

any release rather than continue in prison. My imprisonment was at present no great suffering to me, for I had an honest jailor, who showed me all the kindness he could. I had a large room, and the liberty of walking in a fair garden. My wife was never so cheerful a companion to me as in prison, and was very much against my seeking to be released. She had brought so many necessaries, that we kept house as contentedly and comfortably as at home, though in a narrower room, and had the sight of more of my friends in a day, than I had at home in half a year. I knew also that if I got out against their will, my sufferings would be never the nearer to an end. But yet, on the other side, it was in the extreme heat of summer, when London was wont to have epidemical diseases. The hope of my dying in prison, I have reason to think was one great inducement to some of the instruments to move to what they did. My chamber being over the gate, which was knocked and opened with noise of prisoners, just under me almost every night, I had little hope of sleeping but by day, which would have been likely to have quickly broken my strength, which was so little that I did but live. The number of visitors daily, put me out of hope of studying, or of doing any thing but entertain them. I had neither leave at any time to go out of doors, much less to church on the Lord's days, nor on that day to have any come to me, or to preach to any but my family.

"Upon all these considerations the advice of some was, that I should petition the king. To this I was averse; and my counsellor, Serjeant Fountain, advised me not to seek to it, nor yet to refuse their favour if they offered it, but to be wholly passive as to the court, and to seek my freedom by law, because of my great weakness and the probability of future peril to my life: and this counsel I followed.

"The Earl of Orrery, I heard, did earnestly and specially speak to the king, how much my imprisonment was to his disservice. The Earl of Manchester could do little but by Lord Arlington, who, with the Duke of Buckingham, seemed much concerned in it; but the Earl of Lauderdale, who would have been most forward, had he known the king's mind to be otherwise, said nothing. So all my great friends did me not the least service, but made a talk of it, with no fruit at all. The moderate, honest part of the episcopal clergy were much offended, and said I was chosen out designedly to make them all odious to the people. But Sir John Babor, often visiting me, assured me that he had

spoken to the king about it, but that, after all had done their best, he was not willing to be seen to relax the law and discourage justices in executing it, &c.; but that his majesty would not be offended if I sought my remedy at law, which most thought would come to nothing.

"While I was thus unresolved which way to take, Sir John Babor desiring a narrative of my case, I gave him one, which he showed to Lord Arlington. The lord chief baron, about the same time, at the table at Serjeant's Inn, before the rest of the judges, gave such a character of me, without fear of any man's displeasure, as is not fit for me to own or recite. He was so much reverenced by the rest, who were every one strangers to me, save by hearsay, that I believe it much settled these resolutions. The Lord Chief Justice Vaughan was no friend to Nonconformity, or Puritans; but he had been one of Selden's executors, and so Judge Hale's old acquaintance. Judge Tyrell was a well-affected, sober man, and Serjeant Fountain's brother-in-law by marriage, and sometime his fellow-commissioner for keeping the great seal and chancery. Judge Archer was one that privately favoured religious people: and Judge Wild, though greatly for the prelates' way, was noted for a righteous man. These were the four judges of the court.

"My *habeas corpus* being demanded at the Common Pleas, was granted, and a day appointed for my appearance. When I came, the judges, I believe, having not before studied the Oxford act, when Judge Wild had first said I hope you will not trouble this court with such causes, asked whether the king's counsel had been acquainted with the case, and seen the order of the court; which being denied, I was remanded back to prison, and a new day set. They suffered me not to stand at the bar, but called me up to the table, which was an unusual respect; and they sent me not to the Fleet, as is usual, but to the same prison, which was a greater favour.

"When I appeared next, the lord chief justice, coming towards Westminster Hall, went into Whitehall by the way, which caused much talk among the people. When he came, Judge Wild began, and having showed that he was no friend to conventicles, opened the act, and then opened many defaults in the mittimus, for which he pronounced it invalid; but, in civility to the justices, said, that the act was so penned, that it was a very hard thing to draw up a mittimus by it; which was no compliment to the parliament. Judge Archer next spake largely

against the mittimus, without any word of disparagement to the main cause, and so did Judge Tyrell after him. Judge Vaughan concluded in the same manner, but with these two singularities above the rest. He made it an error in the mittimus, that the witnesses were not named, seeing that the Oxford act giving the justices so great a power if the witnesses be unknown, any innocent person may be laid in prison, and shall never know where, or against whom, to seek remedy, which was a matter of great moment.

"When he had done with the cause, he made a speech to the people, and told them that by their appearance, he perceived that this was an affair of as great expectation as had been before them. It being usual with the people to carry away things by halves, and as their misreports might mislead others, he therefore acquainted them, that though he understood that Mr. Baxter was a man of great learning and of a good life, yet he having this singularity, that he was a conventicler, and as the law was against conventicles, it was only upon the error of the warrant that he was released. That the judges were accustomed, in their charges at assizes, to inquire after conventicles, which are against the law; so that, if they that made the mittimus, had but known how to make it, they could not have delivered him, nor can do it for him, or any that shall so transgress the law.

"This was supposed to be that which was resolved on at Whitehall, by the way. But he had never heard what I had to say in the main cause, to prove myself no transgressor of the law; nor did he at all tell them how to know what a conventicle is, which the common law is so much against.

"Being discharged from my imprisonment, my sufferings began; for I had there better health than I had for a long time before or after. I had now more exasperated the authors of my imprisonment. I was not at all acquitted as to the main cause. They might amend their mittimus, and lay me up again. I knew no way how to bring my main cause, whether they had power to put the Oxford oath on me to a legal trial, and my counsellors advised me not to do it, much less to question the judges for false imprisonment, lest I were borne down by power. I had now a house of great rent on my hands, which I must not come to, and had no other house to dwell in. I knew not what to do with all my goods and family. I must go out of Middlesex; I must not come within five miles of a city, corpo-

ration, &c. Where to find such a place, and therein a house, and how to remove my goods thither, and what to do with my house till my time expired, were more trouble than my quiet prison by far, and the consequents yet worse.

"Gratitude commandeth me to tell the world who were my benefactors in my imprisonment, and calumny as much obligeth me, because it is said among some that I was enriched by it. Serjeant Fountain's general counsel ruled me. Mr. Wallop and Mr. Offley lent me their counsel, and would take nothing. Of four serjeants that pleaded my cause, two of them, Serjeant Windham, afterwards baron of the Exchequer, and Serjeant Sise, would take nothing. Sir John Bernard, a person I never saw but once, sent me no less than twenty pieces; the Countess of Exeter, ten pounds; and Alderman Bard, five. I received no more, but I confess more was offered me, which I refused; and more would have been given, but that they knew I needed it not: and this much defrayed my law and prison charges.

"When the same justices saw that I was thus discharged, they were not satisfied to have driven me from Acton, but they made a new mittimus by counsel, as for the same supposed fault, naming the fourth of June as the day on which I preached; and yet not naming any witness, though the act against conventicles was expired long before. This mittimus they put into an officer's hands, in London, to bring me, not to Clerkenwell, but among the thieves and murderers, to the common jail at Newgate, which was, since the fire which burnt down all the better rooms, the most noisome place that I have heard of, of any prison in the land, except the Tower dungeon.

"The next habitation which God's providence chose for me, was at Totteridge, near Barnet, where, for a year, I was fain with part of my family separated from the rest, to take a few mean rooms, which were so extremely smoky, and the place withal so cold, that I spent the winter in great pain; one quarter of a year by a sore sciatica, and seldom free from much anguish."[e]

Between the years 1665 and 1670, Baxter laboured diligently on some of his most important works. It was during this period he produced his 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and his 'Directions to weak Christians how to grow in Grace.' He finished, though he did not then print, his 'Christian Directory.' He enlarged his sermon before the king into a quarto volume,

[e] Life, part iii. pp. 50—60.

on the 'Life of Faith;' beside some minor pieces, such as his 'Cure of Church Divisions.' He wrote also 'his Apology for the Nonconformists,' and a great part of his 'Methodus,' though it was not published till some time afterwards.

During this period also, he had a long discussion in person, and in writing, with Dr. Owen, about the terms of agreement among Christians of all parties. It was not productive of any practical effect at the time; and the blame of its failure Baxter lays upon Owen. The correspondence he has published, from which it is not difficult to account for the failure, without attaching blame to either party. The views of these two distinguished individuals differed, not, indeed, in any essential points, but on various subordinate matters affecting systematic union and co-operation. They differed also in their dispositions and anticipations. Owen was calm, dignified, and firm, but respectful and courteous. Baxter was sharp and cutting in his reproofs, sanguine in his expectations of success; and, confident of his own guileless simplicity, disposed to push matters further than the circumstances of the times admitted. Though not superior in the substantial attainments of the Christian character, the deportment of Owen was bland and conciliating, compared with that of Baxter. Hence, Owen frequently made friends of enemies, while Baxter often made enemies of friends. The one expected to unite all hearts, by attacking all understandings; the other trusted more to the gradual operation of Christian feeling, by which alone he believed that extended unity would finally be effected. The issue has proved that, in this case, Owen had made the wiser calculation.

CHAPTER X.

1670—1676.

Conventicle Act renewed—Lord Lauderdale—Fears of the Bishops about the increase of Popery—Bishop Ward—Grove—Serjeant Fountain—Judge Vaughan—The King connives at the Toleration of the Nonconformists—Shuts up the Exchequer—The Dispensing Declaration—License applied for on Baxter's behalf—Pinner's Hall Lecture—Baxter Preaches at different places—The King's Declaration voted illegal by Parliament—The Test Act—Baxter desired by the Earl of Orrery to draw up new Terms of Agreement—Healing Measure proposed in the House of Commons, which fails—Conduct of some of the Conformists—Baxter's Afflictions—Preaches at St. James's Market-House—Licenses recalled—Baxter employs an Assistant—Apprehended by a Warrant—Escapes being Imprisoned—Another Scheme of Comprehension—Informers—City Magistrates—Parliament falls on Lauderdale and others—The Bishops' Test Act—Baxter's Goods distrained—Various Ministerial Labours and Sufferings—Controversy with Penn—Baxter's Danger—His Writings during this period.

In the year 1670, the act against conventicles was renewed, and made more severe than ever, several new clauses being inserted, which Baxter believed to have a particular reference to his own case. It was declared, for instance, contrary to all justice, that the faults of the mittimus should not vitiate it, and that all doubtful clauses should be interpreted in the sense most unfavourable to conventicles. It seemed as if the intention of the court had been to extirpate the Nonconformists root and branch; for the act was enforced with the utmost rigour against the most respectable persons among them.[f] The meetings in London were continually disturbed by bands of soldiers. Dr.

[f] Sheldon again addressed the bishops of the province of Canterbury, urging them to promote, by every means in their power, "so blessed a work as the preventing and suppressing of conventicles," which the king and parliament, "out of their pious care for the welfare of the church and kingdom," had endeavoured to accomplish in the late act.—*Calamy's Abridgment*, i. 328—331. Harris also, in his 'Life of Charles II.,' has given the letter entire, vol. ii. pp. 106, 107. Bishop Wilkins opposed the above act in the House of Lords, notwithstanding the king's request that he would at least be silent.

Manton, though his friends were numerous and powerful, was sent six months to the Gate-house prison for preaching in his own house, in the parish of which he had formerly been minister.

While Baxter remained quiet at Totteridge, he was sent for to Barnet, by the Earl of Lauderdale, who was then proceeding to Scotland with a project of making some alterations in the state of ecclesiastical affairs in that country. By the king's permission, he consulted Baxter, and offered him, if he would go to Scotland, a church, or a bishoprick, or the management of some of the colleges. Baxter was not to be taken in such a trap, for such in all probability it was; as Lauderdale no sooner went into Scotland, than he became one of the greatest persecutors of the Presbyterian church. In answer to his requests and offers, Baxter, on the 24th of June, 1670, wrote him the following admirable letter, which illustrates his character as a minister, his courtesy as a gentleman, and supplies some particulars respecting his family.

" My Lord,

" Being deeply sensible of your lordship's favours, and especially for your liberal offers for my entertainment in Scotland, I humbly return you my very hearty thanks; but the following considerations forbid me to entertain any hopes, or further thoughts of such a removal:

" The experience of my great weakness and decay of strength, and particularly of this last winter's pain, and how much worse I am in winter than in summer, fully persuade me that I should live but a little while in Scotland, and that in a disabled, useless condition, rather keeping my bed than the pulpit.

" I am engaged in writing a book, which, if I could hope to live to finish, is almost all the service I expect to do God and his church more in the world—a Latin Methodus Theologiæ. Indeed I can hardly hope to live so long, as it requires yet nearly a year's labour more. Now, if I should spend that half year, or year, which should finish this work, in travel, and the trouble of such a removal, and then leave it undone, it would disappoint me of the ends of my life. I live only for work, and therefore should remove only for work, and not for wealth and honours, if ever I remove.

" If I were there, all that I could hope for, were liberty to preach the Gospel of salvation, and especially in some university among young scholars. But I hear that you have enough already for this work, who are likely to do it better than I can.

"I have a family, and in it a mother-in-law of eighty years of age, of honourable extract and great worth, whom I must not neglect, and who cannot travel. To such an one as I, it is so great a business to remove a family, with all our goods and books so far, that it deterreth me from thinking of it, especially having paid so dear for removals these eight years as I have done; and being but yesterday settled in a house which I have newly taken, and that with great trouble and loss of time. And if I should find Scotland disagree with me, which I fully conclude it would, I must remove all back again.

"All these things concur to deprive me of the benefit of your lordship's favour. But, my lord, there are other parts of it, which I am not altogether hopeless of receiving. When I am commanded 'to pray for kings and all in authority,' I am allowed the ambition of this preferment, which is all that ever I aspired after, 'to live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' *Diu nimis habitavit anima mea inter osores pacis.*

"I am weary of the noise of contentious revilers, and have oft had thoughts to go into a foreign land, if I could find where I might have healthful air and quietness, but to live and die in peace. When I sit in a corner, and meddle with nobody, and hope the world will forget that I am alive, court, city, and country, are still filled with clamours against me. When a preacher wanteth preferment, his way is to preach or write a book against the Nonconformists, and me by name; so that the *menstrua* of the press, and the pulpits of some, are bloody invectives against myself, as if my peace were inconsistent with the kingdom's happiness. Never did my eyes read such impudent untruths, in matter of fact, as such writings contain. They cry out for answers and reasons of my nonconformity, while they know the law forbiddeth me to answer them unlicensed. I expect not that any favour or justice of my superiors should cure this, but if I might but be heard speak for myself before I be judged by them, and such things believed (for, to contemn the judgment of my rulers, is to dishonour them), I would request that I might be allowed to live quietly to follow my private studies, and might once again have the use of my books, which I have not seen these ten years. I pay for a room for their standing in at Kidderminster, where they are eaten by worms and rats; having no sufficient security for my quiet abode in any place to encourage me to send for them. I would also ask that I might have the liberty every beggar

hath, to travel from town to town. I mean but to London, to oversee the press, when any thing of mine is licensed for it. If I be sent to Newgate for preaching Christ's Gospel (for I dare not sacrilegiously renounce my calling, to which I am consecrated *per sacramentum ordinis*), I would request the favour of a better prison, where I may but walk and write. These I should take as very great favours, and acknowledge your lordship my benefactor if you procure them: for I will not so much injure you as to desire, or my reason as to expect, any greater matters; no, not the benefit of the law.

"I think I broke no law, in any of the preachings of which I am accused. I most confidently think, that no law imposeth on me the Oxford oath, any more than on any conformable minister; and I am past doubting the present mittimus for my imprisonment is quite without law. But if the justices think otherwise now, or at any time, I know no remedy. I have a license to preach publicly in London diocese, under the archbishop's own hand and seal, which is yet valid for occasional sermons, though not for lectures or cures; but I dare not use it, because it is in the bishop's power to recall it. Would but the bishop, who, one should think, would not be against the preaching of the Gospel, not recall my license, I could preach occasional sermons, which would absolve my conscience from all obligation to private preaching. For it is not maintenance that I expect. I never received a farthing for my preaching, to my knowledge, since May 1st, 1662. I thank God that I have food and raiment, without being chargeable to any man, which is all that I desire, had I but leave to preach for nothing; and that only where there is a notorious necessity. I humbly crave your lordship's pardon for the tediousness of this letter; and again return you my very great thanks for your great favours, and remain," &c.[s]

This touching letter was followed by another to the same nobleman, in which Baxter offers some observations on the divided state of the country, and makes a proposal, that moderate divines should be appointed to meet and debate matters, in order to some plan of concord, which might afterwards receive his majesty's approbation. It is surprising, after all that had occurred, he should have had any faith in the utility or success of such a scheme. It does not appear, however, that any attention was paid to it; but after Lauderdale had gone to

[s] Life, part iii. pp. 75, 76.

Scotland, Sir Robert Murray, a confidential friend of his lordship, sent Baxter a frame or body of discipline for the church of Scotland, on which he desired his animadversions. It appears to have been a modified system of episcopacy, which it was the great object of the court then to force upon the people of Scotland. Resistance to it brought on that country the most horrible persecution a Protestant people was ever exposed to from its own Protestant government; and has made the name and form of episcopacy an execration in Scotland to the present time. Baxter's remarks extended not to the principles of the system, but to details, into which it is quite unnecessary to enter.

The Earl of Lauderdale, with whom this correspondence was held, was a very extraordinary character. He had originally been a decided Covenanter; and, indeed, remained a professed Presbyterian to the last. He was actuated by mean and arbitrary principles, fawning to those above him, but imperious and violent to all below. A man of learning, being well acquainted with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and possessed of a strong but blundering mind. Devoted to the interests of Charles II., though he continued to hate even the memory of his royal father. In Scotland he acted like a demon; and by the fury of his behaviour, increased the severity of his administration, which had more of the cruelty of the inquisition, than the legality of justice.[f] Yet this man would talk about religion, and was spoken to and of as a religious character, by Bishop Burnet, Baxter, and other religious men of the day. I shall have occasion to refer to the intimacy between Lauderdale and Baxter, in another part of this work.

"In the latter end of this year, the bishops and their agents gave out their fears of Popery, and greatly lamented that the Duchess of York was turned Papist.[g] They thereupon professed a strong desire that some of the Presbyterians, as they called even the episcopal Nonconformists, might, by some abatement

[f] Burnet's 'Own Times,' vol. i. pp. 142—144.

[g] The Duchess of York, daughter of Clarendon, embraced the same creed as her husband, and, as he tells us, without knowledge of his sentiments, but one year before her death, in 1670. She left a paper at her decease, containing the reasons for her change. See it in Kennet, p. 320. It is plain that she, as well as the duke, had been influenced by the Romanizing tendency of some Anglican divines.—*Hallam*, vol. ii. p. 515. So much for the effects of the writings of Hooker and Heylin, and of the conduct of Morley and Sheldon.

of the new oaths and subscriptions, have better invitation to conform in other things. Bishop Morley, Bishop Ward, and Bishop Dolben,[h] spake ordinarily their desires of it; but after long talk, nothing was done, which made men variously interpret their pretensions. Some thought that they were real in their desires, and that the hinderance was from the court; while others said they would never have been the grand causes of our present situation, if it had been against their wills; that if they had been truly willing for any healing, they would have shown it by more than their discourses; and that all this was but that the odium might be diverted from themselves. I hope they are not so bad as this censure doth suppose. But it is strange that those same men, who so easily led the parliament to what was done, when they had given the king thanks for his declaration about ecclesiastical affairs, could do nothing to bring it to moderate abatements, and the healing of our breaches, if they had been truly willing.

"In the year 1671, the diocese of Salisbury was more fiercely driven on to conformity, by Dr. Seth Ward, than any place else, or than all the bishops in England did in theirs.[i] Many hundreds

[h] Afterwards archbishop of York.

[i] Dr. Seth Ward, who acted in this violent manner, was one of those ecclesiastical turn-coats who, during a succession of changes, always appear to consult their worldly interests. In the time of the Commonwealth he took the engagement to be true to the government as then established. He wrote against the covenant, and took the place of Greaves, as professor of astronomy in the University of Oxford, who was ejected for refusing it. At the Restoration he paid court to the royal party, by supporting all its measures. Even Anthony Wood calls him a "politician," and speaks of him as "winding himself into favour by his smooth language and behaviour."—*Athen. Ox.* Bliss. vol. iv. p. 248. Yet Ward was, in other respects, a respectable man. He was a profound mathematician, and an able speaker; but he was a persecutor. Dr. Pope, the author of his life, endeavours to apologise for his conduct, but very unsatisfactorily: he admits that he endeavoured to suppress conventicles; that his measures produced a petition against him from the principal manufacturers in the towns of his diocese, alleging that their trade had been ruined by him. In answer to all which he says, "he was no violent man as these petitioners represented him; but if at any time he was more active than ordinary against the dissenters, it was by express command from the court—sometimes by letters, and sometimes given in charges by the judges of the assizes; which councils altered frequently—now in favour of the dissenters, and then again in opposition. It is true he was for the act against conventicles, and laboured much to get it to pass, not without the order and direction of the greatest authority, both civil and ecclesiastical; not out of enmity to the dissenters' persons, as they unjustly suggested, but of love to the repose and the welfare of the government. For he believed, if the growth of them were not timely suppressed, it would either cause a ne-

were prosecuted by him with great industry; and among others, that learned, humble, holy gentleman, Mr. Thomas Grove, an ancient parliament man, of as great sincerity and integrity as almost any man I ever knew. He stood it out awhile in a law-suit, but was overthrown, and fain to forsake his country, as many hundreds more are likely to do. His name remindeth me to record my benefactor. A brother's son of his, Mr. Robert Grove, was one of the Bishop of London's chaplains, and the only man that licensed my writings for the press, supposing them not to be against law; in which case I could not expect it. Beside him, I could get no licenser to do it.[k] And as being silenced, writing was the far greatest part of my service to God for his church, and without the press my writings would have been in vain, I acknowledge that I owe much to this man, and one Mr. Cook, the archbishop's chaplain, that I lived not more in vain.

"While I am acknowledging my benefactors, I add that this year died Serjeant John Fountain, the only person from whom I received an annual sum of money; which though through God's mercy I needed not, yet I could not in civility refuse: he gave me ten pounds per annum, from the time of my being silenced till his death. I was a stranger to him before the king's return; save that when he was judge, before he was one of the keepers of the great seal, he did our country great service against vice. He was a man of quick and sound understanding, and upright, impartial life; of too much testiness in his weakness, but of a most believing, serious fervency towards God, and open, zealous owning of true piety and holiness, without regarding the little partialities of sects, as most men that ever I came near in sickness. When he lay sick, which was almost a year, he delivered to the judges and lawyers that sent to visit him such answers as these, 'I thank your lord or master for his kindness; present my service to him, and tell him, it is a great work to die well; his time is near, all worldly glory must come down; intreat him to keep his integrity, overcome temptations, and please God, and

cessity for a standing army to preserve the peace, or a general toleration, which would end in Popery."—p. 68. Pope further informs us, that so effectually did the bishop play his part, that there was scarcely a conventicle left in the diocese of Salisbury, except on the skirts of Wilts, where there was not a settled militia. Yet Ward was no persecutor!

[k] Mr. Grove, who acted this friendly part to Baxter, was afterwards raised to the episcopal bench as bishop of Chichester. This took place in 1691, and his death in 1696.—*Athen. Ox.* vol. iv. p. 337.

prepare to die.' He deeply bewailed the great sins of the times, and the prognostics of dreadful things which he thought we were in danger of; and though in the wars he suffered imprisonment for the king's cause, towards the end he abandoned that party, and greatly feared an inundation of poverty, enemies, Popery, and infidelity.[l]

"During the mayoralty of Sir Samuel Stirling, many jurymen in London were fined and imprisoned by the recorder, for not finding certain Quakers guilty of violating the act against conventicles. They appealed, and sought remedy.[m] The judges remained about a year in suspense; and then, by the Lord Chief Justice Vaughan, delivered their resolution against the recorder, for the subject's freedom from such sort of fines. When he had, in a speech of two or three hours long, spoke vehemently to that purpose, never thing, since the king's return, was received with greater joy and applause by the people; so that the judges were still taken for the pillars of law and liberty.[n]

"The parliament having made the laws against Nonconformists' preaching, and private religious meetings, so grinding and terrible, the king, who consented to those laws, became the sole patron of the Nonconformists' liberties; not by any abatements of law, but by his own connivance as to the execution; the magistrates, for the most part, doing what they perceived to be his will. So that Sir Richard Ford, all the time of his mayoralty, though supposed one of their greatest and most knowing adversaries, never disturbed them. The ministers, in several parties, were oft encouraged to make their addresses to the king, only to acknowledge his clemency, by which they held their liberties,

[l] Fountain, of whom Baxter makes such honourable mention, was son of William Fountain, of Seabroke, in Bucks; and educated at Christ-church, Oxford. He adopted the cause of the parliament, in whose army he had the command of a regiment. He was made a serjeant-at-law by Cromwell, and in 1659 one of the commissioners of the great seal. At the Restoration he was made a serjeant by the king.—*Wood's Fasti*, vol. i. p. 497. Edit. Bliss.

[m] Baxter refers here to the celebrated trial of Penn and Mead, before the recorder of London, who has thus, with the lord mayor, Stirling, obtained an infamous notoriety. The trial rendered immense service to the cause of liberty.

[n] Sir John Vaughan, lord chief justice of the Common Pleas, who acquitted himself so nobly on this occasion, was a man of excellent parts and good learning. He was the intimate friend of Selden, and a man of the same principles and independence. His son published his Reports, among which is the case above referred to. Baxter has noticed his treatment of his own case in the preceding chapter, in which he appears to have acted with a good deal of tact.

and to profess their loyalty. Sir John Baber introduced Dr. Manton, Mr. Ennis, a Scots Nonconformist, Mr. Whittaker, Dr. Annesly, Mr. Watson, and Mr. Vincent, &c. The king told them, that though such acts were made, he was against persecution, and hoped ere long to stand on his own legs, and then they should see how much he was against it. By this means, many scores of nonconformable ministers in London kept up preaching in private houses. Some fifty, some a hundred, many three hundred, and many one thousand or two thousand at a meeting; by which, for the present, the city's necessities were much supplied, for very few of the burnt churches were yet built up again. Yet this never moved the bishops to relent, or give any favour to the preaching of Nonconformists; and though the best of the Conformists, for the most, were got up to London, alas! they were but few: and the most of the religious people were more and more alienated from the prelates and their churches.°

"Those who from the beginning saw plainly what was doing, lamented all this. They thought it was not without great cunning, that seeing only a parliament was formerly trusted with the people's liberties, and could raise a war against him (interest ruling the world), it was contrived that this parliament should make the severest laws against the Nonconformists, to grind them to dust, and that the king should allay the execution at his pleasure, and become their protector against parliaments; and that they who would not consent to this should suffer. Indeed, the ministers themselves seemed to make little doubt of this; but they thought, that if Papists must have liberty, it was as good for them also to take theirs as to be shut out; that it was not lawful for them to refuse their present freedom, though they were sure that evil was designed in granting it; and that before men's designs could come to ripeness, God might, in many ways, frustrate them. All attempts, however, to get any comprehension, as it was then called, any abatement of the

° The conduct of the court towards the dissenters at this time, can only be explained by a knowledge of the secret treaty with France; the object of which, on Charles's part, was to be rendered independent of parliament; the object of France was the re-establishment of Popery in England. Though the relaxation of the persecution of the dissenters is said to have proceeded from the advice of Shaftesbury, who had no concern in the original secret treaty with France, it was completely in the spirit of that compact, and must have been acceptable to the king.—*Hallam*, ii. 525.

rigour of the laws, or legal liberty and union, were most effectually made void.[p]

"In the beginning of the year 1671-2, the king caused his Exchequer to be shut; so that whereas a multitude of merchants and others had put their money into the bankers' hands, and the bankers lent it to the king, and the king gave orders to pay out no more of it for a year, the murmur and complaint in the city were very great, that their estates should be, as they called it, so surprised. This was the more complained of, because it it was supposed to be in order to assist the French in a war against the Dutch; they therefore took a year to be equal to perpetuity, and the stop to be a loss of all, seeing wars commonly increase necessities, but do not supply them. Among others, all the money and estate that I had in the world, of my own, was there, except ten pounds per annum, which I enjoyed for eleven or twelve years. Indeed, it was not my own, which I will mention to counsel those that would do good, to do it speedily, and with all their might. I had got in all my life, the net sum of one thousand pounds. Having no child, I devoted almost all of it to a charitable use, a free-school; I used my best and ablest friends for seven years, with all the skill and industry I could, to help me to some purchase of house or land to lay it out on, that it might be accordingly settled. But though there were never more sellers, I could never, by all these friends, hear of any that reason could encourage a man to lay it out on, as secure, and a tolerable bargain; so that I told them, I did perceive the devil's resistance of it, and did verily suspect that he would prevail, and I should never settle, but it would be lost. So hard is it to do any good, when a man is fully resolved. Divers such observations, verily 'confirm me, that there are devils that keep up a war against goodness in the world."[q]

The shutting up of the Exchequer, by which many were totally ruined, was one of the most infamous transactions of an infamous reign. The Earl of Shaftesbury was considered at the time the principal adviser of the measure; but he took care previously to withdraw his own money from the hands of his banker, and to advise some of his friends to do the same. The real author of the measure, it is now known, was Lord Clifford.[r]

[p] Life, part iii. pp. 86—88. [q] Ibid. part iii. p. 89.

[r] Shaftesbury defends himself against the charge of having advised the measure, or approving of it, in a letter to Locke, which Lord King has published.

The stoppage, as Baxter says, was intended to last only for a year; but it does not appear that he ever recovered the money. He bore the loss, however, very patiently, and records the disaster rather to instruct others how to use their property, than to mourn over it himself. The difficulty he experienced in disposing of his thousand pounds, which he ascribes to the devil's resistance, is a curious illustration of the peculiarity of his own mind. He appears always to have found great difficulty in satisfying himself, where there was the least room for doubt or objection. Doubts presented themselves to him, which would scarcely have occurred to any other man. He possessed great decision of character, yet often strangely manifested a want of decision of mind. It is to be regretted, if this was owing to satanic influence, that he should have allowed the devil to have such advantage over him.

We come now to a very important event in the history of these times; the king's declaration, dispensing with the penal laws against the Nonconformists. This document was issued on the 15th of March, 1672, and declares "that his majesty, by virtue of his *supreme power in matters ecclesiastical*, suspends all penal laws thereabout, and that he will grant a convenient number of public meeting-places to men of all sorts that conform not. Provided the persons are approved by him; that they only meet in places sanctioned by him, with open doors, and do not preach seditiously, nor against the church of England." *

The evident design of this transaction, projected by Shaftesbury, was to secure liberty, not to the Nonconformists, but to the Roman Catholics; consequently, the views of the London ministers, as might be expected, were not harmonious as to the use which should be made of this just, but illegal privilege.

It is plain enough, from that letter, however, that he had taken care that his own interests should not be affected by the measure. It was properly the commencement of the national debt, and produced at the time universal dismay.

* The Lord Keeper Bridgman resigned the great seal because he would not attach it to this act, and Shaftesbury, the author of the measure, succeeded to his place. Locke was at this time appointed secretary to Shaftesbury, for the presentation of benefices. It is probable, therefore, that Shaftesbury's designs were not intended in hostility to the dissenters.—*Lord King's Life of Locke*, p. 33. Locke's letter to a person of quality states very clearly the part which Shaftesbury took in this measure, and the reasons which influenced him.

"When it came out," says Baxter, "the London nonconformable ministers were invited to return his majesty their thanks. At their meeting, Dr. Seaman and Mr. Jenkins, who had been till then most distant from the court, were for a thanksgiving, in such high applauding terms as Dr. Manton, and almost all the rest, dissented from. Some were for avoiding terms of approbation, lest the parliament should fall upon them; and some, because they would far rather have had any tolerable state of unity with the public ministry than a toleration; supposing, that the toleration was not chiefly for their sakes, but for the Papists, and that they should hold it no longer than that interest required it; which is inconsistent with the interest of the Protestant religion, and the church of England: and that they had no security for it, but it might be taken from them at any time.

"They thought that it tended to continue our divisions, and to weaken the Protestant ministry and church; and that while the body of the Protestant people were in all places divided, one part was still ready to be used against the other, and many sins and calamities kept up. They thought the present generation of Nonconformists was likely to be soon worn out, and the public assemblies to be lamentably disadvantaged by young, raw, unqualified ministers, that were likely to be introduced; they concluded, therefore, on a cautious and moderate thanksgiving for the king's clemency, and their own liberty; and when they could not come to agreement about the form of it, Lord Arlington introduced them to a verbal, extemporate thanksgiving; and so their difference was ended as to that.[t]

"The question, whether toleration of us in our different assemblies, or such an abatement of impositions as would restore some ministers to the public assemblies by law, were more

[t] I apprehend Baxter has here fallen into some mistake. It is not likely the ministers would have been received to deliver an extempore address. Besides, if they could not agree among themselves what to say in writing, who would have undertaken to speak for them? An address drawn up by Owen, though he seldom appears in Baxter's accounts of the London ministers, was adopted on this occasion.—*Memoirs of Owen*, pp. 272, 273. 2d Edit. It was at this time, if we may believe Burnet, that the court ordered fifty pounds a year to be paid to most of the Nonconformist ministers in London, and a hundred to the chief of them. Baxter, he says, sent back his pension, and would not touch it; but most of the others took it. Burnet gives this on Stillingfleet's authority, and represents it as hush money. It is very strange, if this was done, that Baxter should not have mentioned it.—*Burnet's Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 16. Calamy remarks on this passage, in 'His Own Life,' vol. ii. p. 468.

desirable, was a great controversy then among the Nonconformists, and greater it had been, but that the hopes of abatement, called then a comprehension, were so low as made them the less concerned in the agitation of it. But whenever there was a new session of parliament, which put them in some little hope of abatement, the controversy began to revive according to the measure of those hopes. The Independents and all the sectaries, and some few Presbyterians, especially in London, who had large congregations, and liberty and encouragement, were rather for a toleration. The rest of the Presbyterians, and the episcopal Nonconformists, were for abatement and comprehension." [u]

The several parties were influenced by their respective principles of church government and civil establishments. All parties, however, were glad to obtain what they could, and to use the temporary freedom which was allowed, though in a very unconstitutional manner, for the promotion of the interests of religion. The attachment to Popery on the part of the reigning powers, threatened great danger to the country; but I very much doubt, whether if this had not created much anxiety to the church party, the Nonconformists would not have been entirely crushed. From the conflicting interests of party, the cause of the dissenters in this country has often been permitted to gain ground, till their body has arrived at such a measure of strength as even now constitutes its best security.

In the month of October of this year, Baxter fell into a dangerous fit of sickness, which, he says, God, in his wonted mercy, did, in time, so far remove as to restore him to some capacity of service.—"I had till now forborne, for several reasons, to seek a license for preaching from the king, upon the toleration; but when all others had taken theirs, and were settled in London and other places, as they could get opportunity, I delayed no longer, but sent to seek one, on condition I might have it without the title of Independent, Presbyterian, or any other party, but only as a Nonconformist. Before I sent, Sir Thomas Player, chamberlain of London, had procured it me so, without my knowledge or endeavour. I had sought none so long, because I was unwilling to be, or seem, any cause of that way of liberty, if a better might have been had, and therefore would not meddle in it. I lived ten miles from London, and thought it not just to come and set up a congregation there till the ministers had

[u] Life, part iii. pp. 99, 100.

fully settled theirs, who had borne the burden in the times of the raging plague, and fire, and other calamities, lest I should draw away any of their auditors, and hinder their maintenance. No one that ever I heard of till mine could get a license, unless he would be entitled in it, a Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, or of some sect.

"The 19th of November,[x] my baptism day, was the first day, after ten years' silence, that I preached in a tolerated, public assembly, though not yet tolerated in any consecrated church, but only against law, in my own house. Some merchants set up a Tuesday's lecture in London, to be kept by six ministers, at Pinner's Hall, allowing them twenty shillings a piece each sermon, of whom they chose me to be one. But when I had preached there only four sermons, I found the Independents so quarrelsome with what I said, that all the city did ring of their backbitings and false accusations;[y] so that, had I but preached for unity, and against division, or unnecessary withdrawing from each other, or against unwarrantable narrowing of Christ's church, it was said, abroad, that I preached against the Independents. Especially if I did but say that man's will had a natural liberty, though a moral thraldom to vice; that men might have Christ and life, if they were truly willing; and that men have power to do better than they do; it was cried abroad, among all the party, that I preached up Arminianism, and free will, and man's power; and, O! what an odious crime was this![z]

"On January the 24th, 1672-3, I began a Tuesday lecture at Mr. Turner's church, in New Street, near Fetter Lane, with great convenience, and God's encouraging blessing; but I never

[x] Here is another discrepancy of date from what is given in the 'Baptismal Register,' and referred to in the first page of this volume. According to this, he was not baptised either on the *sixth* or the *sixteenth*; but it is pretty evident he was born on the twelfth of November, according to his own account.

[y] For some reason or other, Baxter and the Independents seem never to have agreed. There were probably faults on both sides; though, I apprehend, the principal causes were, the rashness and imprudence with which he carried things to the pulpit, and allowing himself to be influenced by mischievous and often trifling reports.

[z] The Tuesday morning lecture now set up, continues to the present time, and is regularly preached at New Broad-street Meeting-house. It is not to the credit of the dissenters, that some of their most respectable ministers were long left to deliver that lecture to almost empty benches. The lecturers, much to their honour, though I believe they derive no pecuniary benefit from their labours, continue them, as there is some property for the good of others entrusted to their distribution.

took a penny of money for it from any one.[a] On the Lord's days I had no congregation to preach to, but occasionally to any that desired me, being unwilling to set up a church and become the pastor of any, or take maintenance in this distracted and unsettled way, unless further changes should manifest it to be my duty; nor did I ever give the sacrament to any one person, but to my flock at Kidderminster. I saw it offended the Conformists, and had many other present inconveniences, while we had any hope of restoration and concord from the parliament.

"The parliament met again in February, and voted down the king's declaration as illegal. The king promised them that it should not be brought into precedent; and thereupon they consulted of a bill for the ease of Nonconformists, or dissenters. Many of them highly professed their resolution to carry it on; but when they had granted the tax, they turned it off, and left it undone, destroying our shelter of the king's declaration; and so leaving us to the storm of all their severe laws, which some country justices rigorously executed, though the most forbore.[b]

"On February the 20th, I took a house in Bloomsbury, in London, and removed thither after Easter, with my family; God having mercifully given me three years of great peace, among quiet neighbours, at Totteridge, and much more health or ease than I expected, and some opportunity to serve him.

"The parliament grew into great jealousies of the prevalency of Popery. There was an army raised which lay upon Blackheath, encamped, as for service against the Dutch: in which so many of the commanders were Papists, as made men fear the design was worse. They feared not to talk openly, that

[a] The place in which Baxter officiated in Fetter Lane, is that between Nevil's Court and New Street, now occupied by the Moravians. It appears to have existed, though perhaps in a different form, before the fire of London. Turner, who was the first minister, was a very active man during the plague. He was ejected from Sunbury, in Middlesex, and continued to preach in Fetter Lane till towards the end of the reign of Charles II., when he removed to Leather Lane. Baxter carried on the Friday morning lecture till the 24th of August, 1682. The church which then met in it was under the care of Mr. Lobb, whose predecessors had been Dr. Thomas Goodwin and Thankful Owen. It has been preserved by an unbroken line of Evangelical pastors to the present time, in which it enjoys the ministry of my venerable friend the Rev. George Burder, and his worthy co-pastor the Rev. Caleb Morris.—See 'Wilson's Dissenting Churches,' vol. iii. p. 420.

[b] It was suspected that the women about the king interposed, and induced him to withdraw his declaration. Upon this, Shaftesbury turned short round, provoked at the king's want of steadiness, and, especially, at his giving up the point about issuing writs in the recess of parliament.—*Hallam*, vol. ii. p. 530.

the Papists, having no hope of getting the parliament to set up their religion by law, did design to take down parliaments, and reduce the government to the French model, and religion to their state, by a standing army. These thoughts put them into dismal expectations, and many wished that the army, at any rate, might be disbanded. The Duke of York being general, the parliament made an act that no man should be in any office of trust who would not take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance; receive the sacrament according to the order of the church of England; and renounce transubstantiation. Some that were known, sold or laid down their places: the Duke of York and the new lord treasurer, Clifford, laid down all. It was said that they did it on supposition that the act left the king empowered to renew their commissions when they had laid them down: but the lord chancellor told the king that it was not so; and so they were put out by themselves. This settled men in the full belief that the Duke of York and Lord Clifford were Papists. The Londoners had special hatred against the duke, ever since the burning of London, commonly saying, that divers were taken casting fire-balls, and brought to his guards of soldiers to be secured, whom he let go, and both secured and concealed them."[c]

It was in these circumstances that the celebrated Test Act was passed. The church party, according to Burnet, showed a noble zeal for their religion; and the dissenters got great reputation for their silent deportment. The design of the measure is very obvious; but the impropriety of doing evil that good might come, is strikingly illustrated by it. To get rid of the Duke of York, and a Popish party, who might have been thrown out by other means, the prostitution of a sacred ordinance of religion was resorted to, by which a gross enormity came to be perpetuated in the country for more than a century and a half. The disinterestedness of the dissenters in submitting to let this bill pass quietly, is more worthy of commendation than is their wisdom; while the injustice and ingratitude of the party which then praised them, do it infinite discredit. It is highly satisfactory to the enlightened men of all parties that this abomination is now no more.

Though the preamble of the act, and the whole history of the transaction, show that the main object was a safeguard against Popery, it is probable that a majority of both houses liked it the better for this secondary effect of shutting out the Presbyterians still more than had been done by previous statutes

[c] Life, part iii. p. 106.

of this reign. There took place, however, a remarkable coalition between the two parties; for many who had always acted as high churchmen and cavaliers, sensible, at last, of the policy of their common adversaries, renounced a good deal of the intolerance and bigotry that had characterised the present parliament. The dissenters, with much disinterestedness, gave their support to the Test act: in return, a bill was brought in, and, after some debate, passed to the Lords, repealing, in a considerable degree, the persecuting laws against their worship. The Upper House, perhaps insidiously, returned it with amendments more favourable to the dissenters, and insisted upon them, after a conference. A sudden prorogation put an end to this bill, which was as unacceptable to the court as it was to the zealots of the church of England.[d]

"On the 20th of October, the parliament met again, and suddenly voted an address to the king, about the Duke of York's marriage with the Duke of Modena's daughter, an Italian Papist, akin to the pope, and to desire that it might be stopped, she being not yet come over. As soon as they had done that, the king, by the chancellor, prorogued them till Monday following, because it was not usual for a parliament to grant money twice in a session. On Monday, when they met, the king desired speedy aid of money against the Dutch; and the lord chancellor set forth the reasons and the unreasonableness of the Dutch. But the parliament still stuck to their former resentment of the Duke of York's marriage, and renewed their message to the king against it, who answered them that it was debated at the open council, and resolved that it was too late to stop it. On Friday, October 31, the parliament went so high as to pass a vote that no more money should be given till the eighteen months of the last tax were expired, unless the Dutch proved obstinate, and unless we were secured against the danger of Popery, and Popish counsellors, and their grievances were redressed. It voted also to ask of his majesty a day of humiliation, because of the growth of Popery. It intended solemnly to keep the Gunpowder Plot, and appointed Dr. Stillingfleet to preach before it, who was then mostly engaged in

[d] Hallam, vol. ii. pp. 532, 533. Some of the ablest discussions respecting the Test act, and the circumstances in which it was passed, took place in the debates on the passing of the Repeal bill, in the year 1828. Lord Holland's speech, on introducing the bill in the House of Lords, is a masterly specimen of historical accuracy and parliamentary eloquence. In the 'Test Act Reporter,' all the debates are accurately recorded.

writing against Popery: but on the day before, being November 4th, the king, to their great discontent, prorogued the parliament to the 7th of January.

"On that day, the parliament met again, and voted that their first work should be to prevent Popery, redress grievances, and be secured against the instruments or counsellors of these evils. They shortly after voted the Dukes of Buckingham and Lauderdale unfit for trust about the king, and desired their removal. When they came to the Lord Arlington, and would have treated him in the same manner, without an impeachment, it was carried against that attempt; and because the members who favoured the Nonconformists were against the rest, and helped off Lord Arlington, the rest were greatly exasperated against them, and reported that they did it because he had furthered the Nonconformists' licenses for tolerated preaching.

"The 3d of February was a public fast against Popery, the first which I remember, beside the anniversary fasts, which had ever been since this parliament was called, which had now sat longer than that called the Long Parliament. The preachers, Dr. Cradock and Dr. Whitchcot, meddled but little with that business, and did not please them as Dr. Stillingfleet had done; who greatly animated them and all the nation against Popery, by his open and diligent endeavours for the Protestant cause.

"During this session, the Earl of Orrery[d] desired me to draw him up, in brief, the terms and means which I thought would satisfy the Nonconformists, so far as to unite us all against Popery; professing that he met with many great men that were much for it, and particularly the new lord treasurer, Sir Thomas Osborn, afterwards created Lord Danby,[e] and Dr. Morley, bishop of Winchester, who vehemently professed his desires of it. Dr. Fulwood, and also divers others, had been with me to the like purpose, testifying the said bishop's resolution herein. I wished them all to tell him from me, that he had done so much to the

[d] Formerly Lord Broghill, under which title he is generally spoken of by Baxter, and other writers of that period. He was a very distinguished man, and probably sincerely desirous on this occasion to promote the good of the country, and the benefit of the Nonconformists, to whom he was a steady friend.

[e] Danby succeeded Clifford, on the fall of the cabal ministry. He was not a Papist like his predecessor; but was a corrupt man, capable of resorting to measures, to please the court, which were most injurious to the constitution and interests of his country. It was through his instrumentality, however, that the marriage of the Princess Mary with the Prince of Orange was effected, to which circumstance we ultimately owe the Revolution.

contrary, and never any thing this way, since his professions of that sort, that till his real endeavours convinced men, it would not be believed that he was serious. But when I had given the Earl of Orrery my papers, he returned them me with Bishop Morley's strictures, or animadversions, as by his words and the hand-writing I had reasons to be confident; by which he made me see fully that all his professions for abatement and concord were deceitful snares, and that he intended no such thing."[f]

Again, our worthy and indefatigable friend of peace took up his pen, and devoted no small attention to this new scheme of union. His proposals, Bishop Morley's strictures, and his reply, are given at large, in his own narrative;[g] but it would be useless to trouble the reader with any part of the documents, since the whole ended, as all other schemes of the same kind had done, in disappointment.

"A little after, some great men of the House of Commons drew up a bill, as tending to our healing, to take off our oaths, subscriptions, and declarations, except the oath of supremacy, and allegiance, and subscriptions to the doctrine of the church of England, according to the 13th of Elizabeth. But showing it to the said Bishop of Winchester, he caused them to forbear, and broke it; and instead of it he furthered an act, to take off only *assent* and *consent*, and the renunciation of the government; which would have been but a cunning snare to make us more remediless, and do no good; seeing that the same things, with the repeated clauses, would be still, by other continued obligations required, as may be seen in the canon for subscription, art. ii., and in the Oxford act, for the oath and for confining refusers. It is credibly averred, that when most of the other bishops were against this ensnaring show of abatement, he told them in the house that had it been but to abate us a ceremony, he would not have spoken in it: but he knew that we were bound to the same things still, by other clauses or obligations, if these were repealed.

"On February 24th, all these things were suddenly ended, the king early and unexpectedly proroguing the parliament till November: whereby the minds of both houses were much troubled, and multitudes greatly exasperated and alienated from the court: of whom many now saw that the leading bishops had been the great causes of our distractions; but

[f] Life, part iii. pp. 102—109. [g] Ibid. pp. 113—140.

others hating the Nonconformists more, were still as hot for prelacy and violence as ever.

"All this while, the aspiring sort of Conformists, who looked for preferment, and the chaplains who lived in fulness, and other malignant factious clergymen, did write and preach to stir up king, parliament, and others, to violence and cruelty against the liberty and blood of the Nonconformists, who lived quietly by them in labour and poverty, and meddled not with them. Some railed at them as the most intolerable villains in the world, especially Sam. Parker, who was jocularly confuted and detected by Mr. Marvel, a parliament man. One Hickeringhill, and others, came near him in their malignity; and Papists taking the advantage, set in and did the like. One wrote a 'Sober Inquiry' of the reasons why the nonconformable ministers were still so valued by the people, which was their grievous vexation, and pretended many causes; I know not whether more malignantly or foolishly, which none could believe but strangers, and those that were blinded by faction, malignity, or false reports.[h]

"The Lord's-day before the parliament was dissolved, one of these prelatists preached to them, to persuade them that we are obstinate, and not to be tolerated or eased by any means but vengeance, urging them to set fire to the faggot, and teach us by scourges or scorpions, and open our eyes with gall. Yet none of these will procure us leave to publish, or offer to authority the reasons of our nonconformity. But this is not the first proof that a carnal, worldly, proud, ungodly clergy, who never were serious in their own professed belief, nor felt the power of what they preach, have been, in most ages of the church, its greatest plague, and the greatest hinderers of holiness and concord, by making their formalities and ceremonies the test of holiness, and their worldly interest and domination the only cement of concord. Oh how much hath Satan done against Christ's kingdom in the world, by setting up pastors and rulers over the churches, to fight against Christ in his own name and livery, and to destroy piety and peace, by a pretence of promoting them!

"At this time, April, 1674, God so much increased my languishing, and laid me so low, by an incessant inflation of my

[h] See an account of the controversy here referred to, and of the behaviour of Parker and Marvel, in 'Memoirs of Owen,' pp. 268—273.

head, and translation of my great flatulency thither to the nerves and members, increasing for ten or twelve weeks to greater pains, that I had reason to think that my time on earth would not be long. And, oh! how good hath the will of God proved hitherto to me: and will it not be best at last? Experience causeth me say to his praise, 'Great peace have they that love his law, and nothing shall offend them; and though my flesh and heart do fail, God is the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

"Taking it to be my duty to preach while toleration continued, I removed the last spring to London, where my diseases increasing for about half a year, constrained me to cease my Friday's lecture,[i] and an afternoon's sermon on the Lord's day in my own house, to my grief; and to preach only one sermon a week at St. James's market-house, where some had hired an inconvenient place. But I had great encouragement to labour there, because of the notorious necessity of the people: for it was noted as the habitation of the most ignorant, atheistical, and popish, about London; while the greatness of the parish of St. Martin, made it impossible for the tenth, perhaps the twentieth person in the parish, to hear in the parish church; and the next parishes, St. Giles and Clement Danes, were almost in the like case.

"On July 5, 1674, at our meeting over St. James's market-house, God vouchsafed us a great deliverance. A main beam, weakened before by the weight of the people, so cracked, that three times they ran in terror out of the room, thinking it was falling, but remembering the like at St. Dunstan's in the West, I reproved their fear as causeless. But the next day, taking up the boards, we found that two rends were so great, that it was a wonder of Providence that the floor had not fallen, and the roof with it, to the destruction of multitudes. The Lord make us thankful![j]

"It pleased God to give me marvellous encouragement in my

[i] I suppose he renewed it again, and continued it, though perhaps with frequent interruptions, till 1682, when he finally gave it up.

[j] On this occasion Mrs. Baxter discovered great presence of mind. After the first crack was heard, she went immediately down stairs, and accosting the first person she met, asked what was his profession. He said, a carpenter. "Can you suddenly put a prop under the middle of this beam?" said she. The man dwelt close by, had a great prop ready, suddenly put it under, while the congregation above knew nothing of it, but had its fears increased by the man's knocking.—*Memoirs of Mrs. Baxter*, p. 61.

preaching at St. James's. The crack having frightened away most of the richer sort, especially the women; most of the congregation were young men of the most capable age, who heard with very great attention, and many that had not come to church for years, received so much, and manifested so great a change (some Papists, and divers others, returning public thanks to God for their conversion), as made all my charge and trouble easy to me. Among all the popish, rude, and ignorant multitude who were inhabitants of those parts, we had scarce any that opened their mouths against us, and that did not speak well of the preaching of the word among them; though, when I first went thither, the most knowing inhabitants assured me that some of the same persons wished my death. Among the ruder sort, a common reformation was notified in the place, in their conversation as well as in their judgments.

"But Satan, the enemy of God and souls, did quickly use divers means to hinder me: by persecution, by the charges of the work, and by the troublesome clamours of some that were too much inclined to separation. First, a fellow, that made a trade of being an informer, accused me to Sir William Pulteney, a justice near, upon the act against conventicles. Sir William dealt so wisely and fairly in the business, as frustrated the informer's first attempts, who offered his oath against me; and before he could make a second attempt, Mr. David Lloyd, the Earl of St. Alban's bailiff, and other inhabitants, so searched after the quality of the informer, and prosecuted him to secure the parish from the charge of his children, as made him flee, and appear no more. I, who had been the first silenced, and the first sent to gaol upon the Oxford act of confinement, was the first prosecuted upon the act of conventicles, after the parliament's condemning the king's declaration, and licenses to preach.

"Shortly after this, the storm grew much greater. The ministers of state had new consultations. The Duke of Lauderdale, the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Danby, the Lord Keeper, Sir Heneage Finch,[k] Bishop Morley, and Bishop Ward, &c., were

[k] Sir Heneage Finch was one of the leading members of the parliament which restored Charles II., by whom he was made solicitor-general immediately after. He became attorney-general in 1670, and lord-keeper of the great seal in 1673; was raised to the chancellorship in 1675, and created Earl of Nottingham in 1681. His lordship was properly the founder of the noble family of Winchilsea. He possessed good learning, considerable eloquence, and was, on the whole, a respectable public character. He himself refused to put the great seal to Lord Danby's pardon.

the men whom the world talked of as the doers of the business. The first thing that appeared, was, his majesty calling the bishops up to London to give him advice what was to be done for the securing of religion. The bishops, after divers meetings and delays, the said duke and lord treasurer being appointed to meet with them, at last advised the king to recall his licenses, and put the laws in execution, which was done by a proclamation, declaring the licenses long since void, and requiring the execution of the laws against Papists (who were most largely mentioned) and conventicles. No sooner was this proclamation published, but special informers were set at work, to ascertain the execution, and I must here also be the first to be accused."[1]

It appears that Baxter, partly to avoid the penalties for not complying with the act of uniformity, and partly for his own relief, employed an assistant, who read a portion of the church service for him on the Lord's day. This partial conformity occasioned many false reports respecting his sentiments, which gave him great trouble, while it failed to commend him to the staunch supporters of ecclesiastical order.

"The Separatists gave out presently that I had conformed, and openly declared my assent and consent, &c.; and so confidently did they affirm it, that almost all the city believed it. The prelatists again took the report from them, with their own willingness that so it should be, and reported the same thing. In one episcopal city, they gave thanks in public that I had conformed; in many counties their news was, that I most certainly conformed, and was, thereupon, to have a bishoprick; which if I should, I had done foolishly in losing thirteen years lordship and profit, and then taken it when I was dying. This was divulged by the Conformists, to fortify their party in the conceits of their innocency, and by the Separatists, in spleen and quarrelsome zeal; but confident lying was too common with both. And yet, the next day, or the next day save one, letters fled abroad, on the contrary, that I was sent to gaol for not conforming.

"While I was thus murmured at by backbiters, sectaries and prelatists, when the king's licenses were recalled, I was the first that was apprehended by warrant, and brought before the justices as a conventicler. One Keeling,[m] an ignorant fellow, had got a warrant, as bailiff and informer, to search after conventiclers,

[1] Life, part iii. pp. 140—153.

[m] Burnet gives a long account of Keeling, with his conduct as a contriver of plots, and an informer.—Vol. ii. pp. 369—390.

Papists and Protestants, which he prosecuted with great animosity and violence. Having then left St. James's, the lease of the house being out, I preached only on Thursdays, at Mr. Turner's. By the act, it was required I should be judged by a justice of the city or division where I preach; but be distrained on by warrant from a justice of the division or county where I live. So that the preaching place being in the city, only a city justice might judge me. Keeling went to many of the city justices, but none of them would grant him a warrant against me; he therefore went to the justices of the county, who lived near me, and one, Sir John Medlicot, and Mr. Bennet, brother to Lord Arlington, ignorant of the law herein, gave their warrant to apprehend me, and bring me before them, or some other of his majesty's justices. The constable, or informer, gave me leave to choose what justices I would go to. I accordingly went with them to seek divers of the best justices, but could find none of them at home, and so spent that day, in a state of pain and great weakness, being carried up and down in vain. But I used the informer kindly, and spake that to him which his conscience, though a very ignorant fellow, did not well digest. The next day, I went with the constable and him, to Sir William Pulteney, who made him show his warrant, which was signed by Henry Montague, son to the late worthy Earl of Manchester, as bailiff of Westminster, enabling him to search, after mass-priests and conventiclers. Sir William showed him and all the company, from the act, that none but a city justice had power to judge me for a sermon preached in the city, and so the informer was defeated. As I went out of the house, I met the Countess of Warwick and Lady Lucy Montague, sister to the said Mr. Henry Montague, and told them of the case and warrant, who assured me, that he whose hand was at it, knew nothing of it; and some of them sent to him, and Keeling's warrant was called in within two or three days. It proved that one Mr. Barwell, sub-bailiff of Westminster, was he that set Keeling on work, gave him his warrant; and told him how good a service it was to the church, and what he might gain by it. Barwell sharply chid Keeling for not doing his work with me more skilfully. Lord Arlington most sharply chid his brother for granting his warrant; and within a few days, Mr. Barwell, riding the circuit, was cast by his horse, and died in the very fall. Sir John Medlicot and his brother, a few weeks after, lay both dead in his house together. Shortly after

Keeling came several times to have spoken with me, to ask my forgiveness; and not meeting with me, went to my friends in the city, with the same words: though a little before, he had boasted, how many hundred pounds he should have of the city justices for refusing him justice. At last he found me within, would have fallen down on his knees to me, and asked me earnestly to forgive him. I asked him what had changed his mind; he told me that his conscience had no peace from the hour that he troubled me, and that it increased his disquiet, that no justice would hear, nor one constable of forty execute the warrant, and all the people cried out against him; but that which set it home, was Mr. Barwell's death, for of Sir John Medlicot's he knew not. I exhorted the man to universal repentance, and reformation of life. He told me he would never meddle in such businesses, or trouble any man more, and promised to live better himself than he had done.

"As the next session of parliament approached, Bishop Morley set upon the same course again, and Bishop Ward, as his second and chief co-agent, joined with him; so that they were famed to be the two bishops that were for comprehension and concord: none so forward as they. At last, Dr. Bates brought me a message from Dr. Tillotson, dean of Canterbury, that he and Dr. Stillingfleet desired a meeting with Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Mr. Pool, and me, to treat of an act of comprehension and union; and that they were encouraged to it by some lords, both spiritual and temporal. We met to consider whether such an attempt was safe and prudent, or whether it was offered by some bishops as a snare to us. I told them my opinion, that experience could not suffer my charity to believe better of some of them; but as they knew Dr. Stillingfleet and Dr. Tillotson to be the likeliest men to have a hand in an agreement, if such a thing should be attempted; they would therefore make themselves masters of it to defeat it, and no better issue could be expected from them. Yet these two doctors were men of so much learning, honesty, and interest, that I took it as our duty to accept the offer, and to try with them how far we could agree, and whether they would promise us secrecy, unless it came to maturity, when it might be further notified by consent. I thought that we might hope for success with these two men; and, in time, it might be some advantage to our desired unity, that our terms were such as they consented to." [n]

[n] Life, part iii. pp. 154—157.

It is irksome to record these constantly recurring schemes of comprehension and union, from which nothing whatever resulted. Tillotson and Stillingfleet appear to have been sincere, while neither Morley nor Ward was so; and thus, after various meetings and discussions, Baxter, who had taken the trouble of drawing up a "Healing Act," and several petitions or addresses to the king, which were never used, was left only with the comfort of reflecting that he had conscientiously sought that peace, which others either wanted the will or the power to promote.

"While the said two bishops were fraudulently seeming to set us in this treaty, their cause required them outwardly to pretend that they would not have me troubled; but I was still the first that was hunted after and persecuted. For even while I was in this treaty, the informers of the city, set on work by the bishops, were watching my preaching, and contriving to load me with divers convictions and fines at once. They found an alderman-justice, even in the ward where I preached, fit for their design, one Sir Thomas Davis, who understood not the law, but was ready to serve the prelates in their own way. To him, oath was made against me, and the place where I preached, for two sermons, which came to threescore pounds fine to me, and fourscore to the owner of the place where we assembled; but I only was sought after and prosecuted.

"The execution of these laws, which were to ruin us for preaching, was so much against the hearts of the citizens, that scarcely any could be found to execute them. Though the corporation oath and declaration had new moulded the city, and all the corporations of the land, except a few, such as Taunton, which were entirely dissolved by it, the aldermen were, for the most part, utterly averse to such employment; so that, whenever an informer came to them, though they forfeited a hundred pounds every time they refused to execute their office, some shifted out of the way, and some plainly denied and repulsed the accusers, and one was sued for it. Alderman Forth got an informer bound to his behaviour, for breaking in upon him in his chamber, against his will. Two fellows, called Stroud and Marshall, became the general informers in the city. In all London, notwithstanding that the third parts of those great fines might be given the informers, very few could be found to do it: and those two were presently fallen upon by their creditors on purpose. Marshall was laid in the Compter for debt, where he remained for a considerable time; but Stroud, keeping

a coffee-house, was not so deep in debt, and was bailed. Had a stranger of another land come into London, and seen five or six poor, ignorant, sorry fellows, unworthy to have been inferior servants to an ordinary gentleman, hunting and insulting even the ancient aldermen, and the lord mayor himself, and all the reverend, faithful ministers that were ejected; while eighty-nine churches were destroyed by the fire; and, in many parishes, the churches yet standing, could not hold a sixth or tenth part of the people, yet those that preached for nothing were prosecuted to utter ruin, with such unwearied eagerness, sure he would have wondered what these prelates and prosecutors were. It may convince us that the designation διάβολοι (false accusers), given in Scripture to some, is not unmeet, when men pretending to be the fathers of the church, dare turn loose half-a-dozen paltry, silly fellows, that know not what they do, to be to so many thousand sober men, as wolves among the sheep, to the distraction of such a city, and the disturbance of so many thousands for worshipping God. How lively doth this tell us, that Satan, the prince of the aerial powers, worketh in the children of disobedience; and that his kingdom on earth is kin to hell, as Christ's kingdom is to heaven!

"When I understood that the design was to ruin me, by heaping up convictions, before I was heard to speak for myself, I went to Sir Thomas Davis, and told him, that I undertook to prove I broke not the law, and desired him that he would pass no judgment till I had spoken for myself before my accusers. But I found him so ignorant of the law, as to be fully persuaded that if the informers did but swear in general that I kept an unlawful meeting on pretence of a religious exercise in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the church of England, he was bound to take this general oath for proof, and to record a judgment; so that the accusers were indeed the judges, and not he. I told him that any lawyer would soon tell him the contrary, and that he was judge whether by particular proof they made good their general accusation, as in case a man be accused of felony or treason, it is not enough that men swear that he is a felon or traitor, they must name what the act was, and prove him guilty. Though I was at charge in feeing counsellors to convince him and others, yet I could not persuade him out of his mistake. I told him that if this were so, any two such fellows might defame and bring to fines and punishment himself and all the magistrates and parliament men

themselves, and all that meet in the parish churches, and they would have no remedy. At last, he told me that he would consult with other aldermen at the sessions, and they would go one way. When the sessions came, I went to Guildhall, and again desired that I might be heard before I was judged; but though the other aldermen, save two or three, were against such doings, I could not prevail with him; but professing great kindness, he then laid all on Sir John Howell, the recorder, saying that it was his judgment, and he must follow his advice. I requested him, and Sir Thomas Allan, to desire the recorder that I might be heard before I was judged, and as it must pass by his judgment, that he would hear me speak; but I could not procure it, as the recorder would not speak with me. When I saw their resolution, I told Sir Thomas Davis, if I might not be heard, I would record to posterity the injustice of his judgment. But I perceived that he had already made the record, though he had not yet given it in to the sessions. At last, upon consultation with his leaders, he granted me a hearing, and three of the informers that had sworn against me met me at his house." [o]

At this meeting, Baxter was charged by the informers with preaching in an unconsecrated place, with being a Nonconformist, and with not using the common prayer. These accusations he met in such a way as confounded the informers and perplexed the alderman, who accordingly suspended his warrant to distrain.

"In the mean time, the parliament met on the 13th of April, 1675, and fell first on the Duke of Lauderdale, renewing their desire to the king, to remove him from all public employment and trust. His chief accusing witness was Burnet, late public professor of theology at Glasgow, who said that he asked him whether the Scotish army would come into England, when Lauderdale replied, that if the dissenting Scots should rise, an Irish army should cut their throats, &c. But because Burnet had lately magnified the said duke, in an epistle before a published book, many thought his testimony now to be more unsavoury and revengeful; every one judging as he was affected. [p] But the king sent

[o] Life, part iii. pp. 165, 166.

[p] Baxter refers here to Bishop Burnet's 'Vindication of the Authority and Constitution of the Church of Scotland,' 12mo, 1673, which is dedicated to the duke, who was then the king's commissioner for Scotland. Burnet himself, was at the time professor of theology in the University of Glasgow. The dedication is abundantly fulsome and adulatory. The duke's "patrociny," the author very earnestly implores. The style of this document is not much in harmony with the character which Burnet afterwards gave of the duke,

them answer, that the words were spoken before his late act of pardon, which, if he should violate, it might cause jealousies in his subjects, that he might do so also by the act of indemnity.

"Their next assault was against the lord treasurer, the Earl of Danby, who found more friends in the House of Commons, which at last acquitted him. But the great work was in the House of Lords, where an act was brought in to impose such an oath on lords, commons, and magistrates, as was imposed by the Oxford act of confinement on ministers, and like the corporation oath; of which more anon. It was now supposed that the bringing of the parliament under this oath and test, was the great work which the house had to perform. The sum of it was, that none commissioned by the king may be by arms resisted, and that none must endeavour any alteration of the government of church or state. Many lords spake vehemently against it, as destructive to the privileges of their house, which should vote freely, and not be pre-obliged by an oath to the prelates. The Lord Treasurer, the Lord Keeper, with Bishop Morley, and Bishop Ward, were the great speakers for it; and the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Hollis, Lord Halifax, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Salisbury, the chief speakers against it; they that were for it being the major part, many of the rest entered their protestation against it.

"The protesting lords having many days striven against the test, and being outvoted, attempted to join to it an oath for honesty and conscience, in these words: 'I do swear, that I will never by threats, injunctions, promises, or invitations, by or from any person whatsoever, nor from the hopes or prospects of any gift, place, office, or trust whatever, give my vote, other than according to my opinion and conscience, as I shall be truly and really persuaded upon the debate of any business in parliament.' But the bishops on their side did cry it down, and cast it out.

"The debating of this test, did more weaken the interest

&c.—*Hist.* vol. i. pp. 142—144. I suspect the bishop himself did not regard this publication as among the wisest things he ever did. In his 'Own Times,' however, he explains the circumstances in which he appeared against the duke, and defends himself against the charge of ingratitude or revenge.—vol. i. pp. 123—125. Bishop Burnet acknowledged to Calamy that "if he had any acquaintance with serious, vital religion, it was owing to his reading Baxter's practical works in his younger days. These works he greatly extolled, saying many handsome things of Baxter and his writings; but expressed his dislike of the multitude of his distinctions."—*Calamy's Own Life*, vol. i. p. 468.

and reputation of the bishops with the nobles, than any thing that ever befell them after the king came in: so much doth unquiet over-doing tend to undoing. The Lords, that would not have heard a Nonconformist say half so much, when it came to be their own case, did long and vehemently plead against that oath and declaration being imposed upon them, which they, with the Commons, had before imposed upon others. They exercised so much liberty, for many days together, in opposing the bishops, and by free and bold speeches against their test, as greatly turned to the bishops' disparagement. The Earl of Shaftesbury, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Bristol,[q] the Marquis of Winchester, the Earl of Salisbury, Lord Hollis, Lord Halifax, and the Lord of Aylesbury, distinguished themselves in the debate; which set the tongues of men at so much liberty, that the common talk was against the bishops. It was said there were so few among the bishops, able to speak to purpose, Bishop Morley, of Winchester, and Bishop Ward, of Salisbury, being their chief speakers, that they grew very low, even as to the reputation of their parts.

"At last, though the test was carried by the majority, those who were against it, prevailed to make so great an alteration of it as made it quite another thing, and turned it to the greatest disadvantage of the bishops, and the greatest accommodation of the cause of the Nonconformists, of any thing that this parliament ever did, for they reduced it to these words of a declaration and an oath.

"'I, A. B., do declare that it is not lawful, on any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him according to law, in time of rebellion and war, in acting in pursuance of such commission.'[r]

[q] Bristol was a Roman Catholic, but appears to have opposed this bill on much the same grounds with the Protestant dissenters. He considered that it endangered the constitution and interests of the country.—*Rapin*, vol. ii. p. 670.

[r] The declaration originally proposed, was as follows:—"I, A. B., do declare, that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, to take up arms against the king; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority, against his person, or against those who are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such commission; and I do swear that I will not, at any time, endeavour the alteration of the government, either in church or state—So help me God."—*Locke's Works*, vol. x. p. 213. The modifying clauses finally introduced, did not alter the spirit or principle of the measure, but rendered the oath ambiguous, and thus so far extracted its poison.

" 'I, A. B., do swear that I will not endeavour an alteration of the Protestant religion now established by law in the church of England; nor will I endeavour any alteration in the government of this kingdom in church or state, as it is by law established.' "[s]

Baxter mentions that the Nonconformists would have taken this declaration and oath, had they been offered them, instead of the Oxford oath, the subscription for conformity, and the corporation and vestry declarations. But the arguments, by which he endeavoured to prove the lawfulness of taking them, though they were doubtless satisfactory to his own mind, savour more of the subtlety of the schoolmen, than of Christian simplicity. By the same mode of reasoning, it would be easy to show the lawfulness of the most unjust and absurd proceedings, or of submission to the grossest outrages on the rights and liberties of men.[t]

"While this discussion was carrying on in the House of Lords, and five hundred pounds voted to be the penalty of the refusers of the test, before it could come to the Commons, a difference took place between the Lords and Commons about their privileges. This was occasioned by two suits that were brought before the Lords, in which two members of the Commons were parties, which led the Commons to send to the Tower Sir John Fagg, one of their members, for appearing at the Lords' bar without their consent, and four counsellors, Sir John Churchill, Serjeant Pemberton, Serjeant Pecke, and another, for pleading there. This the Lords voted illegal, and that they should be released. Sir John Robinson, lieutenant of the Tower, obeyed the Commons; for which the Lords voted him to be a delinquent; and so far went they in daily voting at each other, that the king was fain to prorogue the parliament, from June

[s] Life, part iii. pp. 167, 168.

Sheldon at this time discovered his wonted activity in hunting out separatists from the church of England. Calamy has preserved another circular letter from him, addressed to the bishops of the province of Canterbury, enjoining them to make returns of the number of persons in their dioceses, of all Popish recusants, and "what number of other dissenters were in each parish, of what sect soever, which either obstinately refuse, or wholly absent themselves from the communion of the church of England, at such times as they are by law required."—*Calamy's Abridgment*, vol. i. p. 345.

[t] A full and admirable account of the memorable debate on this bill in the House of Lords, is given by Locke, in his letter to a person of quality; in which, availing himself of the intimacy he enjoyed with Lord Shaftesbury, he opens the secret springs of several of the measures then proposed.—*Locke's Works*, vol. x. pp. 240—246, edit. 1812.

the 9th till October the 13th; there appearing no hope of reconciling them, which rejoiced many that they rose without doing further harm."[u]

The debate on this celebrated bill, commonly called "the Bishops' Test," on account of their united zeal for its accomplishment, lasted five days, before it was committed to a committee of the whole house. It was afterwards debated sixteen or seventeen whole days; the house sometimes sitting from morning till midnight. After it passed the committee in the manner described by Baxter, the grand contest arose between the two houses about their privileges, in consequence of which the king was obliged to prorogue the parliament, so that the bill was never reported to the house by the committee. Its defeat was generally ascribed chiefly to Lord Shaftesbury, who was at the head of the country party, and who was, in private, greatly assisted by John Locke.[x] In this manner did Providence defeat that unjust attempt to injure the rights and liberties of the people of England.

"Keeling, the informer, being commonly detested for prosecuting me, was cast into gaol for debt, and wrote to me to endeavour his deliverance, which I did. A while before, another of the chief informers of the city and my accuser, Marshall, died in the Compter, where his creditors laid him, to keep him from doing more harm; yet did not the bishops change or cease. Two more informers were set on work, who first assaulted Mr. Case's meeting, and next got in as hearers into Mr. Read's meeting, where I was preaching. When they would have gone out to fetch justices, for they were known, the doors were locked to keep them in till I had done; and one of them, supposed to be sent from Fulham, stayed weeping. Yet went they straight to the justices, and the week following heard me again, as informers, at my lectures; but I heard nothing more of their accusation.

"Sir Thomas Davis, notwithstanding all his warnings and confessions, sent his warrants to a justice of the division where I dwelt, to distrain on me, upon two judgments, for fifty pounds, for preaching my lecture in New-street.[y] Some Conformists are

[u] Life, part iii. p. 171. [x] Lord King's 'Life of Locke,' p. 37.

[y] When the warrants were issued by Sir Thomas Davis, Baxter says, "My wife did, without any repining, encourage me to undergo the loss, and did herself take the trouble of removing and hiding my library awhile (many scores of books being so lost), and after, to give it away, *bonâ fide*, some to

paid to the value of twenty pounds a sermon for their preaching, and I must pay twenty pounds, and forty pounds, a sermon, for preaching for nothing. O, what pastors hath the church of England, who think it worth their unwearied labours, and all the odium which they contract from the people, to keep such as I am from preaching the Gospel of Christ, and to undo us for it as far as they are able; though these many years they do not, for they cannot accuse me for one word that ever I preached, nor one action else that I have done; while the greatest of the bishops preach not three a year themselves!

"The dangerous crack over the market-house, at St. James's, put many upon desiring that I had a larger and safer place for meeting; and though my own dulness, and great backwardness to troublesome business, made me very averse to so great an undertaking, judging that it being in the face of the court, it would never be endured, yet the great and incessant importunity of many, out of a fervent desire of the good of souls, did constrain me to undertake it. When it was almost finished, in Oxenden-street, Mr. Henry Coventry, one of his majesty's principal secretaries, who had a house joining to it, and was a member of parliament, spake twice against it in the parliament, but no one seconded him." [s]

For the building of this place he received considerable subscriptions from a number of respectable and wealthy persons. Among the most distinguished of these were, Lady Armine, Sir John Maynard, Sir James Langham; the Countesses of Clare, Tyrconnel, and Warwick, the Ladies Clinton, Hollis, Richards, and Fitzjames; Mr. Hambden; Alderman Ashurst, &c.

By the zeal and influence of his wife, another place was built in Bloomsbury for Mr. Read, in which Baxter engaged to help him occasionally: but he was still doomed to be harassed and hunted by his persecutors. The following is a painful statement of what he endured; while it supplies an interesting illustration of the kindness of Providence which he experienced, as well as of the happy state of his mind:

"I was so long wearied with keeping my doors shut against them that came to distrain on my goods for preaching, that I was fain to go from my house, and to sell all my goods, and to

New England, and the most at home, to avoid distraining on them."—*Memoirs of Mrs. Baxter*, p. 70. It appears that he sent valuable presents of books to Harvard College.

[s] Life, part iii. pp. 171.

hide my library first, and afterwards to sell it; so that if books had been my treasure (and I valued little more on earth), I had now been without a treasure. For about twelve years, I was driven a hundred miles from them; and when I had paid dear for the carriage, after two or three years, I was forced to sell them. The prelates, to hinder me from preaching, deprived me also of these private comforts; but God saw that they were my snare. We brought nothing into this world, and we must carry nothing out. The loss is very tolerable.

"I was the more willing to part with goods, books, and all, that I might have nothing to be distrained, and so go on to preach; and accordingly removing my dwelling to the new chapel which I had built, I purposed to venture to preach in it, there being forty thousand persons in the parish, as is supposed, more than can hear in the parish church, who have no place to go to for God's public worship; so that I set not up church against church, but preached to those that must else have had none. When I had preached there but once, a resolution was taken to surprise me the next day, and send me for six months to the common gaol, upon the act for the Oxford oath. Not knowing this, it being the hottest part of the year, I agreed to go for a few weeks into the country, twenty miles off; but the night before I should go, I felt so ill, that I was fain to send to disappoint both the coach and my intended companion, Mr. Sylvester. When I was thus fully resolved to stay, it pleased God, after the ordinary coach hour, that three men, from three parts of the city, met at my house, accidentally, just at the same time, almost to a minute; of whom, if any one had not been there, I had not gone; viz., the coachman again to urge me, Mr. Sylvester, whom I had put off, and Dr. Cox, who compelled me, and told me he would, else, carry me into the coach. It proved a special, merciful providence of God; for, after one week of languishing and pain, I had nine weeks' greater ease than ever I expected in this world, and greater comfort in my work. For my good friend, Richard Beresford, esq., clerk of the Exchequer, whose importunity drew me to his house, spared no cost, labour, or kindness, for my health or service." *

The extraordinary variety of Baxter's diseases, the enumeration of which follows this passage, would be any thing but entertainment to the reader: suffice it to say, that he was, for many years, a living wonder to himself, and to those who were

* Life, part iii. p. 172.

acquainted with his condition. It is amazing how he could exist, and still more wonderful how he was capable of the unceasing labour in public or in writing, in which he was engaged. Though "in deaths oft," he prosecuted, with unremitting and growing ardour, the service of his Master, and the salvation of his fellow-creatures.

"Being driven from home, and having an old license yet in force, by the countenance of that, and the great industry of Mr. Beresford, I had leave and invitation for ten Lord's days, to preach in the parish churches round about. The first parish that I preached in, after thirteen years' ejection and prohibition, was Rickmersworth, after that at Sarrat, at King's Langley, at Chesham, at Chalford, at Amersham, and that often twice a day. Those heard, who had not come to church for seven years; and two or three thousand heard, where scarcely an hundred were wont to come, and with so much attention and willingness as gave me very great hopes that I never spake to them in vain; thus soul and body had these special mercies.

"But the censures of men pursued me as before: the envious sort of the prelatists accused me, as if I had intruded into the parish churches too boldly, and without authority. The quarrelsome Sectaries, or Separatists, did, in London, speak against me, for drawing people to the parish churches and the liturgy, and many gave out that I did conform. All my days, nothing hath been charged on me as crimes, so much as my costliest and greatest duties. But the pleasing of God, and saving souls, will pay for all.

"The country about Rickmersworth, abounding with Quakers, because W. Penn, their captain, dwelleth there, I was desirous that the poor people should once hear what was to be said for their recovery, which coming to Mr. Penn's ears, he was forward to a meeting, where we continued speaking to two rooms full of people, fasting, from ten o'clock till five.[b] One lord, two knights, and four conformable ministers, beside others, being present; some all the time, some part. The success gave me

[b] No account of this meeting has been printed, as far as is known to me; but part of the correspondence between Penn and Baxter remains. From the letters of Penn it appears that Baxter proposed the meeting, to which Penn acceded. A second meeting appears to have been demanded, but does not seem to have taken place. Penn's language to Baxter, in two of his letters, is very abusive. He tells him, "I perceive the scurvy of the mind is thy distemper; and I fear it is incurable. I had rather be Socrates at the day of judgment, than Richard Baxter." In the last letter, however, he speaks in a much more

cause to believe that it was not labour lost: an account of the conference may be published ere long, if there be cause.[c]

"While this was my employment in the country, my friends at home had got one Mr. Seddon, a Nonconformist, of Derbyshire, lately come to the city as a traveller, to preach the second sermon in my new-built chapel; he was told, and overtold, all the danger, and desired not to come if he feared it. I had left word, that if he would but step into my house through a door, he was in no danger, they not having power to break open any but the meeting house. While he was preaching, three justices, supposed of Secretary Coventry's sending, came to the door to seize the preacher. They thought it had been I, and had prepared a warrant upon the Oxford act, to send me for six months to the common gaol. The good man, and two weak, honest persons, entrusted to have directed him, left the house where they were safe, and thinking to pass away, came to the justices and soldiers at the door, and there stood by them till some one said, 'This is the preacher;' and so they took him, blotted my name out of the warrant and put in his; though almost every word fitted to my case was false of his. To the Gate-house he was carried, where be continued almost three months of the six: and being earnestly desirous of deliverance, I was put to charges to accomplish it, and at last, having righteous judges, and the warrant being found faulty, he had an *habeas corpus*, and was freed upon bonds to appear again the next term."[d]

Baxter was now placed in great jeopardy. His prosecutors were exasperated against him, and determined, if possible, to succeed in the next warrant, which they only waited an opportunity to get against him. Several of the justices, however, who had been his greatest enemies, died. At the same time, he lost his kind and excellent friend, Judge Hale, to whom he had often been indebted, and of whose death he speaks in a very affecting manner. Before proceeding to notice his next trials, I shall just mention the books which he wrote during the period which this chapter embraces.

courteous style; and acknowledges the great civility he had experienced from Baxter at the meeting. The correspondence is curious, as showing, in one way, that Penn was both a man of talents and a gentleman; and, in another, that, when excited by his religious views, he was rabid and vulgar. Baxter could be severe, but it was the severity of an ardent and ingenuous mind; the severity of Penn is sheer ribaldry.—*Baxter's MSS.*

[c] Life, part iii. 174. [d] Ibid. p. 174, 175.

He published, in 1671, his Defence of the Principles of Love —His Answer to Exceptions against it—The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day—The Duty of Heavenly Meditation—Holiness the Design of Christianity—The Difference between the Power of Magistrates and Church Pastors—Vindication of God's Goodness—Second Admonition to Mr. Bagshaw. In 1672, appeared More Reasons for the Christian Religion—Desertion of the Ministry Rebuked—Certainty of Christianity without Popery—A Third Answer to Bagshaw. In 1673 and 1674, he published his Christian Directory, on which he had been employed for some years. In these two years, he also published his Full and Easy Satisfaction, and his Poor Man's Family Book. In 1675, he produced his Catholic Theology, a folio volume, which was followed by several other pieces in the course of that and the following year, which I need not now enumerate. Looking at the number and variety of these works, this must have been one of the busiest periods in his life as a writer. He preached less; but during his afflictive retirement, he laboured incessantly with his pen. The mere oversight of the press of so many works, would have been employment enough for an ordinary man. But Baxter must not be measured by this standard. He lived but to labour; and labour was his life.

CHAPTER XI.

1676—1681.

Baxter resumes preaching in the parish of St. Martin—Nonconformists again persecuted—Dr. Jane—Dr. Mason—Baxter preaches in Swallow-street—Compton, Bishop of London—Lamplugh, Bishop of Exeter—Lloyd, Bishop of Worcester—Various slanders against Baxter—Death of Dr. Manton—Pinner's-Hall Lecture—Popish Plot—Earl of Danby—Baxter's interference on behalf of banished Scotsmen—Hungarians—the Long Parliament of Charles II. dissolved—Transactions of the New Parliament—Bill of Exclusion—Meal-Tub Plot—Baxter's Reflections on the Times—Writings—Death of Friends—Judge Hale—Stubbs—Corbet—Gouge—Ashurst—Baxter's Step-mother—Mrs. Baxter.

In the latter years of Baxter's life, the information which he has furnished respecting himself, is much less particular, than what he has supplied respecting the earlier and more bustling period of it. As he advanced in age, he appears to have lived more retired; and either from choice, or from necessity, took a less active part in public affairs. His ill state of health rendered retirement absolutely necessary, and his experience of the uselessness of contending against the disposition of the government, and the bigotry of the church, probably reconciled him to wait and pray for better times, which happily he lived to see. The gleanings of his last days, however, we must endeavour carefully to gather up. He thus resumes his narrative:

"When I had been kept a whole year from preaching in the chapel which I built, I began in another, in a tempestuous time, on account of the necessity of the parish of St. Martin; where about 60,000 souls had no church to go to, nor any public worship of God! How long, Lord!

"About February and March, 1676, it pleased the king importunately to command and urge the judges, and London justices, to put the laws against Nonconformists in execution; but the nation was backward to it. In London they were often and long commanded to it; till, at last, Sir Joseph Sheldon, the

Archbishop of Canterbury's near relation, being lord mayor, on April 30th, the execution began. They were required especially to send all the ministers to the common jails for six months, on the Oxford act, for not taking the oath, and dwelling within five miles. This day, Mr. Joseph Read was sent to jail, being taken out of the pulpit, preaching in a chapel in Bloomsbury, in the parish of St. Giles. He did so much good to the poor ignorant people who had no other teacher, that Satan owed him a malicious disturbance. He had built the chapel in his own house (with the help of friends), in compassion to those people, who, as they crowded to hear him, so did they follow him to the justices, and to the jail, to show their affection. It being the place where I had been used often to preach, I suppose was somewhat the more maliced. The very day before, I had new secret hints of men's desires of reconciliation and peace, and motions to offer some proposals towards them, as if the bishops were at last grown peaceable. To which, as ever before, I yielded, and did my part, though long experience made me suspect that some mischief was near, and some suffering presently to be expected from them.

"Mr. Jane, the Bishop of London's chaplain,[e] preaching to the lord mayor and aldermen, in the month of June, turned his sermon against Calvin and me. My charge was, that I had sent as bad men to heaven as some that be in hell; because, in my book called the 'Saint's Rest,' I had said, that I thought of

[e] Dr. Jane, of whom Baxter gives this account, was one of the highest of the high churchmen of his day. His father was a member of the Long Parliament; one of the most decided friends of the king; and author of the Εικων αχλαστος, the 'Image unbroken,' in answer to Milton's Εικωνοχλαστης, the 'Image Broken.' The son was educated at Westminster and Oxford, and no doubt expected to rise high in the church, for his father's services. He does not appear, however, to have advanced beyond the deanery of Gloucester, which he held with the precentorship of the church of Exeter. He had the principal share in drawing up the famous decree passed by the University of Oxford, on the 21st of July, 1683, condemning the political principles and writings of Locke, Baxter, Owen, and others of their description. On the 24th of that month, it was presented to Charles II., in the presence of the Duke of York, by Dr. Jane and Dr. Huntingdon, but had the honour to be burnt by the common hangman, by order of the House of Lords, in 1710. Notwithstanding the principles avowed in this document, Dr. Jane was one of four sent to the Prince of Orange, when on his march to London, with an offer of the University plate, to his highness, who declined it; but Jane thought his services then so important, that he took the opportunity of soliciting for himself the see of Exeter. This could not be obtained: in consequence of which he remained secretly disaffected to King William, during his reign. Jane died in 1716.—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, pp. 173, 174.

heaven with the more pleasure, because I should there meet with Peter, Paul, Austin, Chrysostom, Jerome, Wicliff, Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Zanchy, Paræus, Piscator, Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Glover, Sanders, Philpot, Reynolds, Whittaker, Cartwright, Brightman, Bayne, Bradshaw, Bolton, Ball, Hildersham, Pemble, Twisse, Ames, Preston, Sibbs, Brooke, Pym, Hampden. Which of these the man knew to be in hell, I cannot conjecture: it is likely those who differed from him in judgment; but till he prove his revelation, I shall not believe him.

"This makes me remember how, this last year, one Dr. Mason, a great preacher against Puritans,[f] preached against me publicly in London; saying, that when a justice was sending me to prison, and offered to let me stay till Monday, if I would promise not to preach on Sunday, I answered, '*I shall not*,' equivocating; meaning, I shall not *promise*, when he thought I meant, I shall not *preach*. O, these, say the malignants, are your holy men! and was such a . . . . . falsehood fit for a pulpit? Yet such men never spake one word to my face in their lives! The whole truth is this; Ross and Phillips, being appointed to send me to prison, for preaching at Brentford, shut the chamber doors, and would neither show nor tell me who was my accuser or witness, or let any one living be present but themselves. It being Saturday, I requested to stay at home to set my house in order till Monday. Ross asked me, whether I would promise not to preach on Sunday? I answered, 'No; I shall not:' the man not understanding me, said, 'Well, you promise not to preach.' I replied, 'No, Sir, I tell you; I will not promise any such thing: if you hinder me, I cannot help it, but I will not otherwise forbear.' Never did I think of equivocation. This was my present answer, and I went straight to prison upon it; yet did this Ross send this false story behind my back, and among courtiers and prelatists it passed for current, and was worthy Dr. Mason's pulpit impudency. Such were the men that we were persecuted by, and had to do with. Dr. Mason died quickly after.

"Being denied forcibly the use of the chapel which I had built, I was obliged to let it stand empty, and pay thirty pounds

[f] The person of whom Baxter gives this account was, I apprehend, Charles Mason, who was made rector of St. Mary Woolchurch, in 1661, a prebendary of St. Paul's in 1663, and collated to the rectory of St. Peter Le Poor, in 1669. He was author of two or three sermons, of which I know nothing. He died in 1677.

per annum for the ground-rent myself, and glad to preach for nothing, near it, at a chapel built by another for gain, in Swallow-street.[g] It was among the same poor people who had no preaching, the parish having sixty thousand souls in it more than the church could hold. When I had preached there awhile, the foresaid Justice Parry, with one Sabbes, signed a warrant to apprehend me, and on the 9th of November, six constables, four beadles, and many messengers, were set at the chapel doors to execute it. I forbore that day, and afterwards told the Duke of Lauderdale of it, and asked him what it was that occasioned their wrath against me. He desired me to go and speak with the Bishop of London.[h] I did so, and he spake fairly, and with peaceable words; but presently, he having spoken also with some others, it was contrived that a noise was raised, against the bishop at court, that he was treating of a peace with the Presbyterians. But after awhile, I went to him again, and told him it was supposed that Justice Parry was either set at work by him, or at least a word from him would take him off; I desired the bishop, therefore, to speak to him, or provide that the constables might be removed from my chapel doors, and their warrant called in. I offered also to resign my chapel in Oxendon-street to a Conformist, if so be he would procure my continued liberty in Swallow-street, for the sake of the poor multitudes that had no church to go to. He did as good as promise me, telling me that he did not doubt to do it, and so I departed, expecting quietness the next Lord's day; but instead of that, the constable's warrant was continued, though some of them begged to be excused; and against their will they continued guarding the door for above four-and-twenty

[g] There has been a Scots church in Swallow-street for a great many years: but I believe neither the present building, nor the congregation, arose from the labours of Baxter. The English Presbyterian congregation formed by Baxter's preaching, was dissolved about the beginning of last century.—*Wilson's Diss. Churches*, vol. iv. pp. 44—46.

[h] Compton was raised to the see of London, on the death of Hinchman. He had formerly been a soldier, and did not take orders till he was past thirty. He was not a man of learning, or of much talent. According to Burnet, he was humble and modest; but weak, wilful, and strangely wedded to a party. Yet he applied himself diligently to the business of the diocese, and was considered decidedly opposed to Popery.—*Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 144. He did not entirely forget his martial character after he wore lawn sleeves; for, on the landing of the Prince of Orange, he carried off the Princess Anne to Nottingham, and marched into that town at the head of a fine troop of gentlemen and their attendants, as a guard for her highness.

Lord's days after. So I came near the bishop no more when I had tried what their kindnesses and promises signify.

"It pleased God about this time to take away that excellent, faithful minister, Mr. Thomas Wadsworth, of Southwark. Just when I was thus kept out at Swallow-street, his flock invited me to fill his place, where, though I refused to be their pastor, I preached many months in peace, there being no justice willing to disturb us. This was in 1677. When Dr. William Lloyd became pastor of St. Martin's in the Fields, upon Lamplugh's preferment,[l] I was encouraged by Dr. Tillotson, to offer my chapel in Oxendon-street[k] for public worship, which he accepted, to my great satisfaction; and now there is constant preaching there; be it by Conformists or Nonconformists, I rejoice that Christ is preached to the people in that parish, whom ten or twenty such chapels cannot hold."[l]

This account of the transaction was some time afterwards publicly and shamelessly contradicted. Baxter, in the memoir of his wife, had stated that "Dr. Lloyd and his parishioners had accepted the chapel for public worship on the offer of himself and his wife."[m] The author of 'The Complete History of England,' after Calamy's 'Abridgment of Baxter' was published, stated "that this part of the relation, as to the offer of a chapel, is known to be false;" thus giving the lie direct to Baxter's own declaration. Lloyd, however, then bishop of Worcester, being applied to for an explanation of the circumstance, stated "that Mr. Baxter being disturbed in his meeting in Oxendon-street by the king's drums, which Mr. Secretary Coventry caused to be

[l] Dr. Lamplugh, formerly rector of St. Martin's, was raised to the bishoprick of Exeter, in 1676; and after the Revolution, was made archbishop of York. Judging from an anecdote of him told by Baxter, 'Life,' part iii. pp. 178, 179, he must have been both a high and a fierce man. While rector of St. Martin's, he met old Mr. Sanger, a Nonconformist, at the house of one of his parishioners, who was sick, and accosted him, "Sir, what business have you here?" "To visit and pray with my sick friend, who sent for me," was the answer. The doctor then fiercely laid hold of his breast, and thrust him to the door, saying, "Get out of the room, Sir;" to the great dismay of the sick woman, who had shortly before buried her husband.

[k] After the chapel in Oxendon-street, built by Baxter, had been a chapel of ease to the parish of St. Martin for more than a century, it fell again into the hands of the dissenters. The lease of it was taken, in 1807, by the Scots secession church, then under the ministry of the late Rev. Dr. Jerment, who has been succeeded by my respected friend, the Rev. William Broadfoot, its present minister.—*Wilson's Diss. Churches*, vol. iv. p. 56.

[l] Life, part iii. pp. 176—179.

[m] Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Baxter, 4to, p. 57.

beat under the windows, made an offer of letting it to the parish of St. Martin for a tabernacle, at the rent of forty pounds a year; and that his lordship hearing it, said he liked it well. That therefore Mr. Baxter came to him, and proposed the same thing. He then acquainted the vestry with it, which took it upon those terms."[n] Thus the veracity and disinterestedness of Baxter were satisfactorily vindicated. Lloyd, who became successively bishop of St. Asaph and Worcester, was one of the best informed men of his profession, and, on the whole, more moderate in his principles than most of them.

"About March, 1677, fell out a trifling business, which I will mention, lest the fable pass for truth when I am dead. At a coffee-house, in Fuller's Rents, where many Papists and Protestants used to meet together, one Mr. Dyet, son to old Sir Richard Dyet, chief justice in the north, and brother to a deceased, dear friend of mine, the wife of my old, dear friend, Colonel Silvanus Taylor,[o] one that professed himself no Papist, but was their familiar, said openly that I had killed a man with my own hand; that it was a tinker, at my door, who, because he beat his kettle and disturbed me in my studies, I went down and pistoled him. One Mr. Peters occasioned this wrath, by oft challenging, in vain, the Papists to dispute with me; or answer my books against them. Mr. Peters told Mr. Dyet that this was so shameless a slander, that he should answer for it. Mr. Dyet told him that a hundred witnesses would testify it was true, and that I was tried for my life at Worcester for it. To be short, Mr. Peters ceased not till he brought Dyet to my chamber to confess his fault, and ask my forgiveness. With him, came one Mr. Tasbrook, an eminent, sober, prudent Papist; I told him that these usages to such as I, and far worse, were so ordinary, and I had long suffered so much more than words, that it must be no difficulty to me to forgive them to any man; but especially to one whose relations had been my dearest friends; and that he was one of the first gentlemen who ever showed so much ingenuity as to confess and ask forgiveness. He told me, he

[n] Calamy's Abridgment, vol. i. p. 348.

[o] Colonel Taylor was an officer in the parliamentary army, and served some years under Colonel Massey. He was an active man in the county of Hereford. He appears, however, to have obtained favour after the Restoration, and was appointed keeper of the king's stores at Harwich, where he died in 1678. He was a great antiquary; a distinguished amateur in music, having published 'Court Ayres or Pavins,' 'Almaine's Corants and Sarabands;' and a good mathematician and linguist.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1175; *Aubrey*, vol. iii. p. 555.

would hereafter confess and unsay it, and vindicate me as openly as he had wronged me: I told him, to excuse him, that perhaps he had that story from his late pastor at St. Giles', Dr. Boreman, who had printed that such a thing was reported; but I never heard before the particulars of the fable. Shortly after, at the same coffee-house, Mr. Dyet openly confessed his fault." [p]

"In November, 1677, died Dr. Thomas Manton, to the great loss of London, being an able, judicious, faithful man, and one that lamented the intemperance of many self-conceited ministers and people, who, on pretence of vindicating free-grace and Providence, and of opposing Arminianism, greatly corrupted the Christian doctrine, and schismatically impugned Christian love and concord, hereticating and making odious all who spake not as erroneously as themselves. Many of the Independents, inclining to half Antinomianism, suggested suspicions against Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Mr. Howe, myself, and such others, as if we were half Arminians. On which occasion, I preached two sermons on the words of Jude, 'They speak evil of what they understand not.'" [q]

These discourses, which were preached at the merchants' Tuesday morning lecture, at Pinner's Hall, were never, I believe, printed. Baxter had rashly carried some idle reports into the pulpit, and thus occasioned a considerable flame both among the lecturers and the people. The preachers consisted of four Presbyterians and two Independents. I believe the whole matter was, the Independents were more thorough systematic Calvinists than the Presbyterians, though there was no difference of importance between them. They finally separated in 1695, in consequence of the mischievous dispute about Dr. Crisp's sentiments.[r]

"About October, 1678, fell out the murder of Sir Edmund Burry Godfrey, which made a very great change in England. One Dr. Titus Oates had discovered a plot of the Papists, of which he wrote out the particulars very largely, telling how they fired the city, and were contriving to bring the kingdom to Popery, and in order thereto to kill the king. He named the lords,

[p] Life, part iii. p. 179. I have not quoted the tail-piece of this foolish story. It is very odd to find such a man as Baxter accused twice of killing persons. Dr. Boreman's story, to which he alludes, is the affair of Major Jennings, of which we have given an account, with its refutation, in pp. 69—71. They must have been greatly at a loss for scandal, when it was found necessary to accuse Baxter of murder.

[q] Life, part iii. p. 182.

[r] Neal's Purit. vol. v. p. 414.

Jesuits, priests, and others, who were the chief contrivers, and said that he himself had delivered to several of the lords their commissions: that Lord Bellasis was to be general, Lord Petre lieutenant-general, Lord Stafford major-general, Lord Powis lord chancellor, and Lord Arundel, of Warder, (the chief,) to be lord treasurer. He told who were to be the archbishops, bishops, &c., and at what meetings, and by whom, and when all was contrived, and who were designed to kill the king. He first opened all this to Dr. Tongue,[s] and both of them opened it to the king and council. He mentioned a multitude of letters, which he himself had carried or seen, or heard read, that contained all these contrivances. But because his father and he had once been Anabaptists, and when the bishops prevailed, had turned to be conformable ministers, and, afterward, the son turned Papist, and confessed that he long had gone on with them under many oaths of secrecy,[t] many thought that a man of so little conscience was not to be believed. His confessions however were received by some justices of the peace. None was more forward in the search than Sir Edmund Burry Godfrey, an able, honest, and diligent justice. While he was following this work, he was suddenly missing, and could not be heard of. Three or four days after, he was found killed near Mary-le-bonne Park. It was plainly found that he was murdered.[u] The parliament took the alarm upon it, Oates was now believed; and, indeed, all his large confessions, in every part, agreed to admiration. Hereupon the king proclaimed pardon and reward to any one that would confess, or discover the murder. One Mr. Bedlow, that had fled to Bristol, began, and confessed that he knew of it,

[s] Dr. Israel Tongue was one of the city divines, whose head was full of all sorts of fancies about Romish plots and conspiracies. According to Wood, "he understood chronology well, and spent much time and money in the art of alchemy. He was a person cynical and hirsute, shiftless in the world, yet absolutely free from covetousness.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1260. It seems more probable that he was imposed on by Oates, than that he was a party to a scheme of deception.—*Burnet*, vol. i. pp. 424, 425.

[t] From Crosby's 'History of the Baptists,' it appears that this account of Oates is substantially correct. He was a Baptist in his youth, and, after running the round of religious professions, was, in the latter part of his life, received among them again, after a separation of thirty years. In a short time, however, the church with which he connected himself was obliged to exclude him. He seems to have been a consummate hypocrite and villain. —*Crosby*, vol. iii. pp. 166, 182.

[u] The death of Sir Edmund Burry Godfrey is a subject involved in great obscurity. Burnet gives a very minute account of his disappearance, and of the state in which his body was found, but throws no light on the manner in which he came by his death.

and who did it, and named some of the men, the place, and time; it was at the queen's house, called Somerset House, by Fitzgerald and Kelly, two Papist priests, and four others, Berry, the porter, Green, Pranse, and Hill. The priests fled: Pranse, Berry, Green, and Hill, were taken. Pranse first confessed all, and discovered the rest aforesaid, more than Bedlow knew of, and all the circumstances, and how he was carried away, and by whom; and also how the plot was laid to kill the king. Thus Oates' testimony, seconded by Sir Edmund's murder, and Bedlow's and Pranse's testimonies, came to be generally believed. Ireland, a Jesuit, and two more, were condemned, as designing to kill the king. Hill, Berry, and Green, were condemned for the murder of Godfrey, and executed; but Pranse was, by a Papist, first terrified into a denial again of the plot to kill the king, and took on him to be distracted, but quickly recanted of this, and had no quiet till he told how he was afflicted, and renewed all his testimony and confession.[x]

"Coleman, the Duchess of York's secretary, and one of the Papists' great plotters and disputers, being surprised, though he made away all his later papers, was hanged by the former ones that were remaining, and by Oates's testimony;[y] but the parliament kept off all aspersions from the duke: the hopes of some, and the fears of others of his succession prevailed with many.

"At last, the lord treasurer, Sir Thomas Osborne, made Earl of Danby, came upon the stage, having been before the object of the parliament's and people's jealousy and hard thoughts. He being afraid that somewhat would be done against him, knowing that Mr. Montague, his kinsman, late ambassador in France, had some letters of his in his keeping, which he thought might endanger him, got an order from the king to seize on all Mr. Montague's letters; who suspecting some such usage, had

[x] The character of Oates was such that no dependence could be placed upon his testimony. He appears to have been a finished scoundrel, who was afterwards sent to the pillory for perjury in this affair, though he seems to have risen a little in credit after the Revolution. There is reason to believe much of this plot was contrived entirely by him, though some circumstances gave a colour of truth to his statements. Baxter's account shows the degree of credit which it then generally obtained. They who would examine the subject fully must examine the histories of the period.

[y] There is little doubt but that Oates perjured himself, though it is equally certain that Coleman was a great knave, and had acted often in the most unprincipled manner. He served masters who made no scruple of sacrificing their servants, after they had accomplished their own ends by them.—*Burnet*, vol. ii. pp. 214—216.

conveyed away the chief letters; and telling the parliament where they were, they sent and fetched them. On the reading of them they were so irritated against the lord treasurer, that they impeached him in the Lords' House of high treason. But not long after, the king dissolved the long parliament, which he had kept up about seventeen or eighteen years.[z]

"About thirty Scotchmen, of which three were preachers, were by their council sentenced to be not only banished, but sold as slaves, to the American plantations. They were brought by ship to London, where divers citizens offered to pay their ransom. The king was petitioned for them; and I went to the Duke of Lauderdale, but none of us could prevail for one man. At last the ship-master was told, that by a statute it was a capital crime to transport any of the king's subjects out of England, where they now were, without their consent, and so he set them on shore, and they all escaped for nothing.[a] A great number of Hungarian ministers had before been sold for galley slaves, by the emperor's agents, but were released by the Dutch admiral's request, and some of them largely relieved by collections in London.[b]

[z] The best account which I have met with of the Earl of Danby's administration, and of the circumstances relating to his fall, is Hallam's. That able writer, though he does not approve of Danby's principles and conduct, nevertheless vindicates him from charges, which much more belong to his royal master than to him. Danby escaped from the charge of impeachment, and took out a pardon from the king. To this the two Houses would not submit. After a great deal of altercation between the king and parliament, he was committed to the Tower, where he remained till 1684, when he was released on bail. He was created Duke of Leeds in 1694.

[a] The persons here referred to by Baxter were banished from Scotland, for the high crime of attending conventicles contrary to law. Severe as the sufferings of the Nonconformists in England were at this period, they were nothing compared with what was endured by the poor Presbyterians of Scotland. The Highland Watch, as it was called, was let loose upon the country: its inhabitants were spoiled of their goods, cast into prisons, banished, and sold as slaves; and multitudes of them shot in cold blood, and otherwise butchered, sometimes with, and sometimes without, form of law. Woodrow's 'History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scoland,' contains recitals of the most horrible deeds ever perpetrated in a civilized country.

[b] The Hungarian ministers referred to by Baxter, were driven out of their country, or sold for slaves, by the Emperor of Austria. The contest which produced this result was rather for civil than for religious privileges, though the Protestants of Hungary were treated with the utmost barbarity, chiefly on account of their religion. Their churches were seized, their estates and houses sequestered, their persons imprisoned, and dragged to public execution. Two hundred of their ministers were, at one time, in the Spanish galleys, coupled with Turks, Moors, and malefactors. It was for the relief of such sufferers that British benevolence was excited.—*De Foe's Life and Times*, vol. i. p. 91.

"The long and grievous parliament, which silenced about two thousand ministers, and did many works of such nature, being dissolved on the 25th day of January, 1678, a new one was chosen, and met on the 6th day of March, following. The king refusing their chosen speaker, Mr. Seymore, raised in them a great displeasure against the lord treasurer, thinking him the cause; but after some days they chose Serjeant Gregory. The Duke of York removed, a little before, out of England by the king's command; who yet stands to maintain his succession. The parliament first impeached the aforesaid Papist lords for the plot or conspiracy, the Lord Bellasis, Lord Arundel, Lord Powis, Lord Stafford, and Lord Petre, and after them the Lord Treasurer.

"Upon Easter day the king dissolved his privy council, and settled it anew, consisting of thirty men, most of the old ones, the Earl of Shaftesbury being president, to the great joy of the people then, though after all was changed. On the 27th day of April, 1679, though it was the Lord's day, the parliament sat, excited by the confession of Stubbs, that the firing plot went on, and the French were to invade us, and the Protestants to be murdered by the 28th day of June. They voted, that the Duke of York's declaring himself a Papist, was the cause of all our dangers by these plots, and sent to the Lords to concur in the same vote. But the king, that week, by himself and the chancellor, acquainted them that he should consent to any thing reasonable to secure the Protestant religion, not alienating the crown from the line of succession; and particularly that he would consent, that till the successor should take the test, he should exercise no acts of government, but the parliament in being should continue, or if none then were, that which last was should be in power, and exercise all the government in the name of the king. This offer took much with many, but most said that it signified nothing. For Papists easily obtain dispensations to take any tests or oaths; and Queen Mary's case showed how parliament will serve the prince's will.

"On the Lord's day, May 11th, 1679, the Commons sat extraordinarily, and agreed in two votes, first, that the Duke of York was incapable of succeeding to the imperial crown of England; secondly, that they would stand by the king and the Protestant religion with their lives and fortunes; and if the king came to a violent death, which God forbid, they would be revenged on the Papists. The parliament was shortly after-

wards dissolved while it insisted on the trial of the lord treasurer.[c]

The bill of exclusion afterwards passed the House of Commons, and was carried to the House of Lords, where it was lost on the second reading, by a majority of thirty, of whom fourteen were bishops. This fact clearly shows the leaning of many of the dignitaries of the church to the arbitrary and Popish principles which were well known to characterise the Duke of York. In the same session of parliament, which passed the exclusion bill, another business occupied their attention, which also brought to light the unprincipled conduct to which the court could resort. By an act of the 25th of Elizabeth, it was provided that those who did not conform to the church, should abjure the kingdom upon pain of death; and for some degrees of nonconformity, they were adjudged to die, without the favour of banishment. Both Houses passed a bill to repeal this act. It went heavily indeed in the Lords, for many of the bishops, though they were not for putting the law in execution, thought the terror of it was of some use, and that the repeal of it would make the party more insolent. On the day of the prorogation, when the bill should have been presented to the king, the clerk of the crown, by the king's own particular order, withdrew it. He could not publicly refuse it, but he would not pass it; and therefore resorted to this infamous method to destroy it. On the morning of the prorogation, however, as if the Commons anticipated something, they passed two resolutions:—That the laws made against recusants, ought not to be executed against any but those of the church of Rome; and that in the opinion of the House, the laws against dissenters ought not to be executed. This was thought a great invasion of the rights of the other branches of the legislature; and as it was understood to be the wish of the House that courts and juries should regulate their proceedings by this resolution, it gave great offence; so that instead of operating as kindness to the Nonconformists, it raised a fresh storm against them all over the nation.[d]

"There came from among the Papists more and more converts, that detected the plot against religion and the king. After Oates, Bedlow, Everard, Dugdale, and Pranse, came Jervison, a gentleman of Gray's Inn, Smith, a priest, and others; but nothing stopped them more than a plot designed to have

[c] Life, part iii. pp. 183—186. [d] Burnet, vol. ii. pp. 300, 301.

turned all the odium on the Presbyterians and the Protestant adversaries of Popery. They hired one Dangerfield, to manage the matter; but by the industry of Colonel Mansel, who was to have been first accused, and Sir William Waller, the plot was fully detected; and Dangerfield confessed all, and continueth a steadfast convert and Protestant to this day.[e]

"But my unfitness, and the torrent of late matter here, stop me from proceeding to insert the history of this age. It is done, and likely to be done so copiously by others, that these shreds will be of small signification. Every year of late hath afforded matter for a volume of lamentations. But that posterity may not be deluded by credulity, I shall truly tell them, that lying most impudently in print against the most notorious evidence of truth, in the vending of cruel malice against men of conscience, and the fear of God, is become so ordinary a trade, that it is likely with men of experience, to pass ere long for a good conclusion, *dictum vel scriptum est à malignis, ergo falsum est.* Many of the malignant clergy and laity, especially L'Estrange, 'The Observator,'[f] and such others, do with so great confidence publish the most notorious falsehoods, that I must confess it hath greatly depressed my esteem of most history, and of human nature. If other historians be like some of these times, their assertions, whenever they speak of such as they distaste, ought to be read like Hebrew, backward; and are so far from signifying truth, that many for one are downright lies. It

[e] The above paragraph refers to the infamous Meal-tub plot, as it was called, from the pretended scheme being found in a small book concealed in a meal-tub. The object of this sham plot, which caused great trouble to some of the Nonconformists, was to throw the whole blame of the Popish plot on the dissenters. It was by the good providence of God completely defeated. Dangerfield, of whom Baxter, by a strange mistake, speaks as a good Protestant, was an infamous liar. He was tried for his conduct, in King James's reign, sentenced to be whipped at the cart's tail, from Newgate to Tyburn; and while undergoing the punishment, was struck on the head by a student, which caused his death, and for which the fellow was justly hanged.—*Burnet's Own Times*, vol. iii. p. 29.

[f] 'The Observator,' was a political pamphlet of three or four sheets, which L'Estrange published weekly. Having lived during all the troubles of the country, and possessing an exhaustless *copia verborum*, which he poured forth without any restraint, he was one of the most efficient instruments of a corrupt court which then existed. His great object was to defame the men of principle, whether out of, or in, the church; and especially to produce a belief among the clergy, that their ruin was intended. He never failed to consult his own interests, and obtained considerable sums for the service which he did. Henry Care was one of the ablest of L'Estrange's opponents, and his 'Weekly Packet from Rome,' was intended as a set-off against 'The Observator,' and other productions of the same stamp.

is no wonder perjury hath grown so common, when the most impudent lying hath so prepared the way." [s]

Such were the sombre reflections with which Baxter concludes his brief notices of this period of his history. It is not surprising that he was deeply pained, or that he cherished the most gloomy forebodings respecting his country. Religion was in a very perilous and oppressed condition. The best men had been driven out of the church, and their places too generally supplied by persons who cared little for the terms on which they entered, provided they could secure the emoluments. The doctrines of the Gospel were no longer heard in the vast majority of the pulpits; and even the more respectable clergy preached in a cold and inefficient manner. The Nonconformists were continually harassed and persecuted; many of them had died, or left the country, while few were rising up to fill their places, or share in their tribulations. The immoralities and profligacy of the court, were shocking to every sober and well-constituted mind. Its principles and policy were every day more apparently at variance with the constitution, freedom, and prosperity of the country. Under the influence of France, to which Charles had basely sold his country to support his mistresses, the dissenters were oppressed or eased, persecuted or protected, as the interests of Popery, and the caprices of despotism or licentiousness, might dictate. When they suffered severely, they had not the consolation to think, that it was for their own attachment to truth and principle they suffered. They were afflicted, oppressed, or deprived of their privileges, by parliament, chiefly that Roman Catholics might be punished. When they were relieved by the king, it was not that he cared for them, or had become concerned for their wrongs, but that he might promote the interests of a party, which, while it pretended to kiss them as fellow sufferers, was preparing to stab them as soon as it had the power. In such circumstances, vain was the help of man; appeals to justice or to mercy were alike unavailing. Prayer and patience were the only refuge; and to these the Nonconformists betook themselves, not without hope in Him, "who has engaged to hear the prayer of the destitute, and not to despise their prayer."

That Baxter, "though cast down, was not destroyed" in spirit, appears from the number of books which he published during this period, and which seem to have chiefly occupied his

[s] Life, part iii. p. 187.

time. These related mostly, though not exclusively, to the Popish and Nonconformist controversies. He published Select Arguments against Popery; His Sermon in the Morning Exercises, on the same subject; his Roman Tradition Examined; his Naked Popery; Which is the True Head of the Church? —and, On Universal Roman Church Supremacy. All these works were on that subject which then so deeply engaged the minds of men.

On the other topic, he brought out in 1676, The Judgment of the Nonconformists; a thick quarto volume, containing several tracts; The Nonconformist's Plea for Peace; the Second and Third Parts of the Plea; the Defence of it; the True and only way of Concord; his Church History of Bishops; his Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet; his Treatise of Episcopacy; his Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry; his Dissent from Dr. Sherlock; his Search for the English Schismatic; and, his Second True Defence of the Mere Nonconformists. All these, beside his Latin Methodus, and various other pieces of a miscellaneous nature, were the production of four or five years only; and those, years of sorrow, affliction, and persecution. They evince the unsubdued ardour of Baxter's mind, and what importance he attached to the principles for which he and his brethren were called to contend and to suffer. When it is considered that he had only to affix his name to a document containing little that in itself he objected to, but implying his sanction of some wrong principles, with his approbation of unchristian exactions; by doing which he would not merely have escaped from reproach and suffering, but have risen to worldly honour and distinction; his conduct and consistency entitle him to an honourable place among those, who have counted it a privilege, not only to believe, but also to suffer for the sake of Christ. Compared with this honour, how poor are all the distinctions, which wealth and rank can bestow! None of the lords, spiritual and temporal, of his day, will be known over so great a portion of the world, or remembered so long, as Richard Baxter.

During this period, he lost many of his most valued friends, for several of whom he preached and published funeral sermons. Of some of these excellent individuals, it may be proper to give a short account.

His excellent and attached friend, Sir Matthew Hale, whose character has already been given at length, took his departure, after a long and severe illness, on Christmas day, 1676. He

went into the churchyard, and chose his grave, a few days before his death. As a token of his love for Baxter, he left him forty shillings in his will; with which, says Baxter, "I purchased the largest Cambridge Bible, and put his picture before it, as a monument to my house. But waiting for my own death, I gave it Sir William Ellis, who laid out about ten pounds to put it into a more curious cover, and keep it for a monument in his honour." [h]

The Rev. Henry Stubbs was born at Upton, on an estate that was given to his grandfather by King James I., with whom he came from Scotland. After a private education in country schools, he was sent to Wadham College, Oxford, where he staid till he took his degrees. He first was minister of St. Philip's, Bristol, and afterward of Chew-Magna. In 1654, he was of the city of Wells, and assistant to the commissioners, appointed by the parliament to eject ignorant and scandalous ministers. The Act of Uniformity found him in Dursley; though he was not incumbent there, but assistant to Mr. Joseph Woodward, who died of a consumption before Bartholomew day. After he was silenced, he preached from place to place, with unwearied diligence and great success.

On his arrival in London, he preached nearly every day; and some days twice. More than once he fell down in the pulpit in a fit; but recovering, went on again; till at last he was quite disabled by fever and dysentery. What much emboldened him was, that he had often gone into the pulpit ill, and come out of it better. This holy and peaceable man, who lived, Baxter says, "like an incarnate angel," was a minister of the Gospel about fifty years; and dying in London, July 7th, 1678, aged 73, was interred in the new burying-place, Bunhill-fields. Being of a charitable disposition, he devoted the tenth part of his income to pious uses, with which was purchased four pounds per annum for Dursley and Horsley, for teaching poor children, and buying them books. He also gave 200*l.* to Bristol, and a like sum to London, to be annually laid out for the good of the poor, to buy them Bibles, and to assist poor ministers' widows in their necessities. [i]

[h] Life, part ii. p. 181.

[i] Calamy, vol. ii. p. 318—320. It would be very gratifying to know what has become of these legacies; whether they are applied for the benefit of the poor, either in Bristol or London.

Baxter preached his funeral sermon, from Acts xx. 24; in the course of which he speaks very strongly of the eminent spirituality and devotedness of this excellent man. "He was the freest," he says, "of most that ever I knew, from that deceit of the serpent, mentioned in 2 Cor. xi. 3, who corrupteth men by drawing them from the simplicity which is in Christ. His breath, his life, his preaching, his prayers, his conference, his conversation, were Christian simplicity and sincerity. Not as the world calleth simplicity, folly; but as it is contrary to hypocrisy, to a counterfeit zeal, to mere affectation, to a divided heart. He knew not how to dissemble or wear a mask; his face, his mouth, his whole conversation, laid bare his heart. While he passed by all quarrels, few quarrelled with him; and he had the happiness to take up head, heart, and time, with only great, sure, and necessary things."[k]

The Rev. John Corbet was born and brought up in the city of Gloucester, and a student in Magdalen Hall, Oxon. He began his ministry in his native city of Gloucester, and lived for some years, under Dr. Godfrey Goodman, a Popish bishop of the Protestant church. Here he continued in the time of the civil wars, of which he was an observant but mournful spectator. His account of the siege of Gloucester, gives a good view of the rise and springs of the war, in a narrow compass.[l] He afterward removed to Chichester, and thence to Bramshot,

[k] Works, vol. xviii., p. 71.

[l] The little work referred to is, 'An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester, from the Beginning of the Civil War to the Removal of Colonel Massie, 1645.' He wrote also a 'Vindication of the Magistrates of Gloucester, from the Calumnies of Robert Bacon; 1647.' Clarendon has given a long account of the siege of Gloucester, which is honourable to the courage and perseverance of the besieged. His representation of the ambassadors of the people, and their reply to the king's summonses, is very graphic, but very ludicrous. "Within less than the time prescribed, together with the trumpeter, returned two citizens from the town, with lean, pale, sharp, and bad visages; indeed, faces so strange and unusual, and in such a garb and posture, that at once made the most severe countenances merry, and the most cheerful hearts sad; for it was impossible such ambassadors could bring less than a defiance. The men, without any circumstances of duty or good manners, in a pert, shrill, undismayed accent, said, 'They had brought an answer from the godly city of Gloucester to the king;' and were so ready to give insolent and seditious answers to any question, as if their business were chiefly to provoke the king to violate his own safe conduct."—*Hist. of the Rebel.* vol. ii. p. 315. Their answer, notwithstanding this caricature, was firm and respectful; and Charles, after exerting his utmost strength, was at last obliged to raise the siege.

a living of more than 200*l.* a year, from which he was ejected in 1662. He lived privately in and about London, till the king's indulgence, in 1671, when a part of his old flock invited him to Chichester, where he continued his labours with great assiduity and success.

God afflicted him many years with the stone, but while the pain was tolerable to nature, he endured it, and continued to preach, till within a fortnight of his being brought up to London to be cut; but before that could be done, he left this for a better life, December 26th, 1680.[m] His funeral sermon was preached by Baxter, who represents him, as a man of great clearness and soundness in religion, and blamelessness of conversation. "He was of so great moderation and love of peace, that he hated all that was against it, and would have done any thing for concord in the church, except sinning against God, and hazarding his salvation. He was for catholic union and communion of saints, and for going no further from any church or Christians than they force us, or than they go from Christ. He was for loving and doing good to all, and living peaceably with all, as far as was in his power. Something in Episcopacy, Presbytery, and Independency, he liked, and some things he disliked in all. He was true to his conscience, and valued not the interest of a party or faction. If all the Nonconformists in England had refused, he would have conformed alone, if the terms had been reduced to what he thought lawful. He managed his ministry with faithfulness and prudence. He had no worldly designs to carry on, but was eminent in self-denial. He was not apt to speak against those by whom he suffered, nor was he ever pleased with ripping up their faults. He was very careful to preserve the reputation of his brethren, and rejoiced in the success of their labours, as well as of his own; and a most careful avoider of all divisions, contentions, or offences. He was very free in acknowledging by whom he profited; and preferring others before himself. He was much employed in the study of his own heart; as is evident from the little thing of his that is published, called, 'Notes of Himself,' &c. He had good assurance of his own sincerity; and yet was not altogether without his mixture of fears. He had the comfort of sensible growth in grace: he easily perceived a notable increase in his faith and holiness, heavenliness, humility, and contempt of the world, especially in his latter years, and under his affliction, as the fruit of

[m] Calamy, vol. ii. pp. 332—336.

God's correcting rod; and died at last in great serenity and peace."[n]

Of another man of the same school and character, Baxter has left the following memorial:—"The Rev. Thomas Gouge was a wonder of industry in works of benevolence. It would make a volume to recite at large the charity he used to his poor parishioners at St. Sepulchre's, before he was ejected and silenced for nonconformity. His conjunction with Alderman Ashurst and some others, in a weekly meeting, to take account of the honest, poor families in the city that were in great want, he being the treasurer and visitor; his voluntary catechising the Christchurch boys when he might not preach; the many thousand Bibles printed in Welsh, that he dispersed in Wales; 'The Practice of Piety;' 'The Whole Duty of Man;' 'My Call,' and many thousand of his own writings given freely all over the principality; his setting up about three or four hundred schools in it, to teach children to read, and the catechism; his industry, to beg money for all this, besides most of his own estate laid out on it; his travels over Wales once or twice a year, to visit his schools, and oversee the execution. This was true Episcopacy in a silenced minister, who went constantly to the parish churches, and was authorised by an old university license to preach occasionally; yet for so doing he was excommunicated even in Wales, while doing all this good. He served God thus to a healthful age, seventy-four or seventy-six. I never saw him sad, but always cheerful. About a fortnight before he died, he told me that sometimes in the night, some small trouble came to his heart, he knew not what: and without sickness, or pain, or fear of death, they heard him in his sleep give a groan, and he was dead. Oh, how holy and blessed a life, and how easy a death!"[o]

Henry Ashurst, esq., was one of the most valued friends of

[n] Funeral Sermon. Works, vol. xviii. pp. 185—192. The sermon is founded on 2 Cor. xii. 1—9, and is one of the most beautiful of Baxter's discourses. It is full of striking thoughts and pathos. Corbet was a man altogether to Baxter's taste, and of his own mode of thinking.

[o] Life, part iii. pp. 190, 191. A full account of this excellent man, who seems to have been quite an apostle of benevolence, is given in Clark's 'Lives.' Archbishop Tillotson, then dean of Canterbury, preached his funeral sermon, in which he speaks in the highest terms of his piety, philanthropy, and moderation.

Baxter, as well as one of the most distinguished lay Nonconformists of that period. He was the third son of Henry Ashurst, of Ashurst, in Lancashire, by Casandra, daughter of John Bradshaw, of Bradshaw, in the same county. His father was a man of great wisdom and piety, and very zealous for the reformed religion in a county where Popery greatly abounded. Henry came to town when he was only fifteen years of age, where he was bound apprentice to a man void of religion, by whom he was rather severely treated. During his apprenticeship, however, he became decidedly religious, spent most of his spare time in devotion, and of his spare money in procuring religious books. He commenced business as a draper, with 500*l.*, in partnership with a Mr. Row, who left him the whole business in about three years. By his wife, he had a fortune of about 1500*l.* From this commencement, with diligence and economy, he acquired a very ample fortune. His generosity and zeal to relieve distress during the plague and fire of London, and to the distressed Nonconformist ministers, were very great, as has been already noticed; but they were not limited to this country.

So great was his desire of doing good, that not only England, Scotland, and Ireland, experienced the benefit of it, but America also. His active services for the interests of New England, both during the Commonwealth, and after the Restoration, have been elsewhere narrated. For nineteen years after the settlement of the affairs of the New England Society, when he was made treasurer, he had, along with the Honourable Robert Boyle, the chief management of the whole business. Through their instrumentality, Elliot was enabled to carry on his evangelical labours among the poor Indians, and to translate the Scriptures into their language. Mr. Ashurst left in his will a hundred pounds to Harvard College, and fifty to the society. He was universally beloved and respected for active benevolence, and unwearied zeal in doing good. Among the Nonconformists, he acted as a father and a counsellor, while his purse was ever open to relieve their wants, and his house for a refuge to them when persecuted and oppressed. He paid the fine, rather than serve the office of alderman, avoiding as much as possible all connexion with public affairs. "He was," says Baxter, "my most entire friend, and commonly taken for the most exemplary saint of public notice in the city. So sound in judgment, of such admirable meekness, patience, and universal

charity, that we knew not where to find his equal. After much suffering and patience, he died with great quietness of mind, and hath left behind him the perfume of a most honoured name, and the memorials of a most exemplary life, to be imitated by all his descendants."[p]

Baxter preached his funeral sermon, in which he expatiates largely on his character and many virtues, from a very appropriate passage, John xii. 26. He entitles it 'Faithful Souls shall be with Christ,' and dedicates it in a most affectionate address to his widow; to his son Henry, who, as well as his father, was the devoted friend of Baxter, and a lover of all good men; and to all his brothers and sisters.[q]

"Near the same time," he says, "died my father's second wife, Mary, the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks, and sister to Sir Fulke Hunks, the king's governor of Shrewsbury, in the wars. Her mother, the old Lady Hunks, died at my father's house, between eighty and one hundred years old; and my mother-in-law died of a cancer, at ninety-six, in perfect understanding; having lived, from her youth, in the greatest mortification, austerity to her body, and constancy of prayer and all devotion, of any one that ever I knew. She lived in the hatred of all sin, strictness of universal obedience, and, for thirty years, longing to be with Christ; in constant, acquired infirmity of body, got by avoiding all exercise, and long, secret prayer, in the coldest seasons, and such-like. Being of a constitution naturally strong, she was afraid of recovering whenever she was ill. For some days before her death she was so taken with the ninety-first Psalm, that she would get those who came near her to read it to her over and over; which Psalm, also, was a great means of comfort to old Beza, even against his death."[r]

But the greatest loss which Baxter sustained was that of his wife, which took place, after a short but painful illness, on the 14th of June, 1681. She was buried on the 17th of the same month, in Christchurch, then still in ruins, in her own mother's tomb. "The grave," he says, "was the highest, next the old altar, or table, in the chancel, on which her daughter had caused a very fair, rich, large marble-stone to be laid, about twenty years ago, on which I caused to be written her titles, and some Latin verses, and these English ones:

[p] Life, part iii. p. 189. [q] Works, xviii. p. 121. [r] Life, part iii. p. 189.

'Thus must *thy* flesh to silent dust descend,
Thy mirth and worldly pleasure thus will end;
Then, happy, holy souls!—but wo to those
Who heaven forgot, and earthly pleasures chose.
Hear, now, this preaching grave:—without delay,
Believe, repent, and work while it is day.'

But Christ's church on earth is liable to those changes of which the Jerusalem above is in no danger. In the doleful flames of London, 1666, the fall of the church broke the marble all to pieces; so that it proved no lasting monument. I hope this paper monument, erected by one who is following even at the door, in some passion indeed of love and grief, but in sincerity of truth, will be more publicly useful and durable than that marble stone was." [s]

Howe preached the funeral sermon, and dedicated it to her husband. The text is, 2 Cor. v. 8; and the discourse is worthy of the talents and piety of the author; but it contains little about Mrs. Baxter. He appears to have known something of her before her marriage, when she displayed "a strangely-vivid and great wit, with very sober conversation." [t] He commends the greatness of her mind, and her disinterestedness in choosing Baxter for a husband, as well as her amiable conduct after she became his wife.

Of this excellent woman, so remarkably fitted to be the wife of such a man as Richard Baxter, we have already spoken at some length. The attachment, as may be guessed at from allusions occurring in certain parts of his Breviate of her Life, commenced on her part, and had almost killed her in consequence of her effort to conceal it. Throughout, it seems to have been exceedingly ardent; and her husband often hints that she had expected more from him than she found. He also tells us, however, that she confessed she expected more sourness and bitterness than she experienced. She was active, benevolent, and intelligent; devoted to the service of Christ; and disposed, in every possible way, to aid her husband in his unwearied labours. He has said little about her in the account of his own life, owing to having given a full account of her in a separate biography. In that little work he has drawn her portrait at full length, detailing, with his usual minuteness and fidelity, both her

[s] Mrs. Baxter's Life, p. 99. Mrs. Baxter's mother died in 1661. He preached a funeral sermon for her at St. Mary Magdalene, Milk-street, where he then occasionally officiated. She appears to have been an excellent, devoted Christian.—*Works*, xviii. 1—56.

[t] Howe's Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Baxter, pp. 40, 41.

faults and virtues. A few passages from this work, will illustrate her personal character and piety.

"As to religion, we were so perfectly of one mind, that I know not that she differed from me in any one point, or circumstance, except in the prudential management of what we were agreed in. She was for universal love of all true Christians, and against appropriating the church to a party; and against censoriousness and partiality in religion. She was for acknowledging all that was of God in Conformists and Nonconformists; but she had much more reverence for the elder Conformists than for most of the young ones, who ventured upon things which dissenters had so much to say against, without weighing or understanding the reasons on both sides; merely following others for worldly ends, without a tender fear of sinning. If any young men of her own friends were inclined merely to swim with the stream, without due trial of the case, it greatly displeased her, and she thought hardly of them.

"The nature of true religion, holiness, obedience, and all duty to God and man, was printed, in her conceptions, in so distinct and clear a character, as made her endeavours and expectations still look at greater exactness than I, and such as I, could reach. She was very desirous that we should all have lived in a constancy of devotion and a blameless innocency; and in this respect she was the meetest helper that I could have had in the world, that ever I was acquainted with. For I was apt to be over careless in my speech and too backward to my duty, and she was still endeavouring to bring me to greater readiness and strictness in both. If I spake rashly or sharply, it offended her. If I carried it (as I was apt) with too much neglect of ceremony or humble compliment to any, she would modestly tell me of it. If my very looks seemed not pleasant, she would have me amend them (which my weak, pained state of body indisposed me to do). If I forgot any week to catechise my servants, and familiarly instruct them personally, beside my ordinary family duties, she was troubled at my remissness. And whereas of late years my decay of spirits, and diseased heaviness and pain, made me much more seldom and cold in profitable conference and discourse in my house than I had been when I was younger, and had more ease, and spirits, and natural vigour, she much blamed me, and was troubled at it, as a wrong to herself and others. Yet her judgment agreed with mine, that too much and often table talk of the best things, doth but tend to dull the

common hearers, and harden them under it, as a customary thing; and that too much good talk may bring it into contempt, or make it ineffectual." [u]

The death of such a woman, in the prime of life (for she was little more than forty when she died), was an irreparable loss to Baxter. She had tenderly nursed him for many years, and now, with increased age and infirmity, he was left to sorrow over her tomb, though not without hope. The decision of her character, the fervency of her piety, the activity and disinterestedness of her Christian benevolence, left no doubt remaining that her spirit rested with God, where it has long since been joined by that of her much-loved companion and husband.

[u] Life of Mrs. Baxter, pp. 76—80.

CHAPTER XII.

1681—1687.

The continued Sufferings of Baxter—Apprehended and his Goods distrained—Could obtain no Redress—General Sufferings of the Dissenters—Mayot's Legacy—Baxter again apprehended and bound to his good behaviour—Trial of Rosewell for High Treason—Baxter brought before the Justices, and again bound over—His concluding Reflections on the State of his own Times—Death of Charles II.—Fox's notice of the Treatment of the Dissenters, and of the Trial of Baxter—Apprehended on a Charge of Sedition—Brought to Trial—Indictment—Extraordinary Behaviour of Jefferies to Baxter and his Counsel—Found Guilty—Endeavours to procure a New Trial, or a mitigated Sentence—His Letter to the Bishop of London—Fined and imprisoned—Remarks on the Trial—Conduct of L'Estrange—Sherlock—Behaviour while in Prison—The Fine remitted—Released from Prison—Assists Sylvester in the Ministry.

WHILE friend after friend was consigned to the tomb, and Baxter was left alone to endure what he justly describes as a living death, in the constant and increasing sufferings of his diseased and emaciated body, his enemies would allow him no rest. Bonds and imprisonment still awaited him. With an account of a series of these vexations and trials, this chapter is chiefly occupied. The reader will probably find it difficult to determine whether he ought more to feel indignant at the treatment which an aged, infirm, and most respectable minister of Christ endured, from a professedly Christian government, or admiration of the principles and temper by which it was sustained. The first of the iniquitous proceedings is thus described by himself. The latter part of the statement must touch the heart of every feeling individual.

He had retired into the country, from July, 1682, to the 14th of August following, when he returned in great weakness. "I was able," he says, "to preach only twice; of which the last was my usual lecture, in New-street, and which fell out to be

the 24th of August, just that day twenty years that I, and near two thousand more, had been by law forbidden to preach. I was sensible of God's wonderful mercy that had kept so many of us twenty years, in so much liberty and peace, while so many severe laws were in force against us, and so great a number were round about us, who wanted neither malice nor power to afflict us. I took, that day, my leave of the pulpit and public work in a thankful congregation: and it was like, indeed, to be my last.

"But after this, when I had ceased preaching, and was newly risen from extremity of pain, I was suddenly surprised by a poor, violent informer, and many constables and officers, who rushed in, apprehended me, and served on me one warrant to seize my person for coming within five miles of a corporation, and five more warrants to distrain for a hundred and ninety pounds for five sermons. They cast my servants into fears, and were about to take all my books and goods, when I contentedly went with them towards the justice to be sent to jail, and left my house to their will. But Dr. Thomas Cox meeting me, forced me in again to my couch and bed, and went to five justices, and took his oath, without my knowledge, that I could not go to prison without danger of death. On that the justices delayed a day, till they could speak with the king, and told him what the doctor had sworn: so the king consented that, for the present, imprisonment should be forborne, that I might die at home.[x] But they executed all their warrants on my books and goods, even the bed that I lay sick on, and sold them all. Some friends paid them as much money as they were prized at, which I repaid, and was fain to send them away. The warrant against my person was signed by Mr. Parry and Mr. Phillips; the five warrants against my goods, by Sir James Smith and Sir James Butler. I had never the least notice of any accusation, or who were the accusers or witnesses, much less did I receive any summons to appear or answer for myself, or ever saw the justices or accusers. The justice that signed the warrants for execution, said, that the two Hiltons solicited him for them, and one Buck led the constables who distrained.

"But though I sent the justice the written deeds, which proved that the goods were none of mine, nor ever were; and

[x] The king said, "*Let him die in his bed.*"—*Baxter's Penitent Confessions*, p. 39.

sent two witnesses whose hands were to those conveyances, and offered their oaths of it; and also proved that the books I had many years ago alienated to my kinsman, this signified nothing to them, they seized and sold all nevertheless; and both patience and prudence forbade us to try the title at law, when we knew what charges had lately been given to justices and juries, and how others had been used. If they had taken only my cloak, they should have had my coat also; and if they had smitten me on one cheek, I would have turned the other: for I knew the case was such, that he that will not put up with one blow, one wrong, or slander, shall suffer two; yea, many more.

"But when they had taken and sold all, and I had borrowed some bedding and necessaries of the buyer, I was never the quieter; for they threatened to come upon me again, and take all as mine, whosesoever it was, which they found in my possession. So that I had no remedy, but utterly to forsake my house and goods and all, and take secret lodgings at a distance, in a stranger's house; but having a long lease of my own house, which binds me to pay a greater rent than now it is worth, wherever I go, I must pay that rent.

"The separation from my books would have been a greater part of my small affliction, but that I found I was near the end both of that work and that life which needeth books, and so I easily let go all. Naked came I into the world, and naked must I go out; but I never wanted less what man can give, than when men had taken all away. My old friends, and strangers, were so liberal, that I was fain to restrain their bounty. Their kindness was a surer and larger revenue to me than my own. But God was pleased quickly to put me past all fear of men, and all desire of avoiding suffering from them by concealment; by laying on me more himself than man can do. Then imprisonment, with tolerable health, would have seemed a palace to me; and had they put me to death for such a duty as they persecute me for, it would have been a joyful end of my calamity: but day and night I groan and languish under God's just afflicting hand. The pain which before only tried my reins, and tore my bowels, now also fell upon my bladder, and scarce any part, or hour, is free. As waves follow waves in the tempestuous seas, so one pain followeth another in this sinful, miserable flesh. I die daily, and yet remain alive. God, in his great mercy, knowing my dulness in health and ease, doth make it much easier to repent and hate my sin, loathe myself, contemn the world, and sub-

mit to the sentence of death with willingness, than otherwise it was ever likely to have been. O, how little is it that wrathful enemies can do against us, in comparison of what our sin and the justice of God can do! and, O, how little is it that the best and kindest of friends can do for a pained body, or a guilty, sinful soul, in comparison of one gracious look or word from God! Wo be to him that hath no better help than man: and blessed is he whose help and hope are in the Lord!" [y]

While we execrate the tyranny which doomed this righteous man to so much undeserved suffering, every Christian must unfeignedly bless God for the illustration of the principles and power of religion, which Baxter was enabled to afford in such trying circumstances. Those who think of him only as a sectarian, or a wrangling controversialist, must now regard him with admiration, exercising the faith and patience of the saints; braving danger, enduring pain, despising life, and rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. In his case, tribulation, indeed, wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, which made him not ashamed.

Notwithstanding the resolutions of the House of Commons, mentioned in the former chapter, the dissenters continued to be exceedingly molested in every part of the country. Orders and directions were issued from the king and the Council Board, to suppress all conventicles; which were zealously obeyed by the justices of Hicks' Hall, in Southwark, and by some of the city justices. The dissenters were tried by mercenary judges, before packed juries, on Irish evidence. Their meetings were often interrupted and broken up, and their ministers imprisoned and fined.[z] Distress and dismay were every where experienced, and no end seemed approaching of the sufferings which they were doomed to endure. The employment of informers, the invention of plots, and the variety of schemes adopted to entrap and ensnare men, produced almost universal mistrust and suspicion. It was dangerous to give utterance to the expression of fear, or hope, and far more, to indulge in the language of complaint or censure. Every advantage was taken, and every dishonourable method resorted to, to ensnare the innocent, and to crush the influential. God, alone, could deliver his people and the country from the woes which already distressed, and the greater woes which promised to follow.

With the statement of Baxter's case, in reference to his late

[y] Life, part iii. pp. 191, 192. [z] Calamy, vol. i. pp. 356, 357.

treatment, had he been allowed to present it in court, it is unnecessary to occupy these pages. It is a satisfactory defence of himself, even as the law then stood; and his own view of it was supported by the opinion of eminent counsel. But what signifies law, when they who occupy the seat of judgment, are determined to oppress, and act unjustly. As an evidence of this, take the following example: "About this time, one Mr. Robert Mayot,[a] of Oxford, a very godly man, that devoted all his estate to charitable uses, a Conformist, whom I never saw, died, and, beside many greater gifts to Abingdon, &c., gave, by his last will, 600*l.*, to be by me distributed to sixty poor, ejected ministers, adding, that he did it not because they were Nonconformists, but because many such were poor and pious. But the king's attorney, Sir Robert Sawyer,[b] sued for it in Chancery, and the Lord Keeper North[c] gave it all to the king; which made many resolve to leave nothing to charitable uses after their death, but do what they did while they lived."[d]

Providence mercifully interposed to defeat this unrighteous measure. The money was paid into Chancery by order of the court, to be applied to the maintenance of a chaplain for Chelsea College. It was there kept safely till after the Revolution, when the commissioners of the great seal restored it to Baxter, to be applied according to the will of the testator; which was done accordingly.[e] It is remarkable in how many instances God

[a] Mr. Mayot was a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England. His will was made in 1676. He died in 1683. His legacy is a striking proof of the estimation in which Baxter was held, not only among the Nonconformists, but among the respectable part of the Church.

[b] Sawyer, the attorney-general, was a dull, hot man; and forward to serve all the designs of the court.—*Burnet*, ii. 353.

[c] Roger North, the biographer of this noble family, has given a particular account of the Lord Keeper Guildford; from which it would seem that he was a man of parts and learning, though he did not appear to great advantage in the court of Chancery. He was considered to be too much inclined to favour the court, though he seems to have been often sick of its measures. Burnet speaks of him as a crafty and designing man; guilty of great mal-administration of justice; and who died despised and ill-thought of by the whole nation.—*Own Times*, vol. iii. pp. 67, 68.

[d] Life, part iii. p. 198.

[e] Calamy, vol. ii. p. 361. Some account of this affair is given in Vernon's 'Reports;' in which Baxter is unjustly represented as swearing that he was a Conformist. Whereas he only swears to his answer given in to the attorney-general's bill of complaint. That answer merely alleges Baxter's moderation in the matters of controversy with the Church, and his joining, from time to time, in the worship of the Church, which it is well known he often did. Baxter's answer, with some appropriate remarks on Vernon, by Calamy, is given in the continuation of his 'Account of the Ejected Ministers,' vol. ii. pp. 922—932.

thwarts the designs of the wicked, and accomplishes the object which his servants have contemplated with a view to his glory. A wicked and unjust policy may succeed for a time; but it generally defeats its own purpose, and furnishes the means by which its designs are entirely frustrated. We are thus supplied with continued marks of the footsteps of a Divine Providence in the world; so that, long before the final consummation, men may draw the conclusion, that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked, and "that verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth."[f]

"In 1684, while I lay in pain and languishing, the justices of the sessions sent warrants to apprehend me, about a thousand more being in catalogue to be all bound to their good behaviour. I thought they would send me six months to prison for not taking the Oxford oath, and dwelling in London, and so I refused to open my chamber door to them, their warrant not being to break it open: but they set six officers at my study door, who watched all night, and kept me from my bed and food, so that the next day I yielded to them, who carried me, scarce able to stand, to the sessions, and bound me in four hundred pounds bond to my good behaviour. I desired to know what my crime was, and who were my accusers; but they told me it was for no fault, but to secure the government in evil times, and that they had a list of many suspected persons that they must do the like with, as well as me. I desired to know for what I was numbered with the suspected, and by whose accusation; but they gave me good words, and would not tell me. I told them I had rather they would send me to jail than put me to wrong others, by being bound with me in bonds that I was likely to break to-morrow; for if there did but five persons come in when I was praying, they would take it for a breach of good behaviour. They told me not if they came on other business unexpectedly, and not to a set meeting, nor yet if we did no-

[f] There is another curious case of a will, which is connected with Baxter. Sir John Gayer, who died a good while after him, left 5000*l.*, "to poor ministers, who were of the pious and charitable principles of the late Rev. Richard Baxter." His peculiar manner of devising the legacy gave rise to doubts, as to whether the money should be distributed among Churchmen or Dissenters. The executrix and the trustees differed between themselves. But after a considerable delay the question was brought into the court of Chancery, when the master of the rolls, Sir Joseph Jekyl, in a very handsome manner, decided in favour of the Dissenters.—*Calamy's Own Life*, vol. ii. pp. 476—478.

thing contrary to law and the practice of the church. I told them our innocency was not now any security to us. If two beggar women did but stand in the street, and swear that I spake contrary to the law, though they heard me not, my bonds and liberty were at their will; for I myself, lying on my bed, heard Mr. J. R. preach in a chapel, on the other side of my chamber, and yet one Sibil Dash, and Elizabeth Cappell, two miserable, poor women who made a trade of it, swore to the justices that it was another that preached, and they had thus sworn against very many worthy persons, in Hackney, and elsewhere, on which their goods were seized for great mulcts or fines. To all this I had no answer, but that I must give bond, when they knew that I was not likely to break the behaviour, unless by lying in bed in pain." [s]

The trial of the Rev. Thomas Rosewell, at this time, created a great sensation in the country. He was minister of Rotherhithe, and was imprisoned in the Gate-house, in Westminster, by a warrant from Sir George Jefferies, for high treason. A bill was found against him at the quarter sessions at Kingston, in Surrey; upon which he was arraigned on October the 25th, and tried November the 18th following, at the King's Bench by a Surrey jury, before Chief Justice Jefferies and three other judges of that court, Withins, Holloway, and Walcot. The high treason, as laid in the indictment and sworn to by the witnesses, was, that in a sermon which he preached on September the 14th, he said these words:—'That the people,' meaning the subjects of our sovereign lord the king, 'made a flocking to the said' sovereign lord the king, 'upon pretence of healing the king's evil, which he,' meaning our said sovereign lord the king, 'could not do; but that we,' meaning himself and other traitorous persons, subjects of our said lord the king, 'are they to whom they,' meaning the subjects of our said lord the king, 'ought to flock, because we,' meaning himself and the said other traitorous persons, 'are priests and prophets, that, by our prayers, can heal the dolors and griefs of the people. We,' meaning the subjects of our said sovereign lord the king, 'have had two wicked kings,' meaning the most serene Charles the First, late king of England, and our said sovereign lord the king that now is, 'whom we can resemble to no other person but to the most wicked Jeroboam.'

[s] Life, part iii. p. 198, 199.

And 'that if they,' meaning the said evil-disposed persons, then and there, so, as aforesaid, with him, unlawfully assembled and gathered together, would stand to their principles, 'he,' meaning himself, 'did not fear but they,' meaning himself and the said evil-disposed persons, 'would overcome their enemies,' meaning our said sovereign lord the king and his subjects, 'as in former times, with rams' horns, broken platters, and a stone in a sling.' The witnesses were three women, who swore to the words as they stand, without the inuendos. The trial lasted about seven hours. Roswell made a full and luminous defence of himself, very modestly, and yet strenuously, vindicating his innocence, to the satisfaction of those who were present, and so as to gain the applause of many gentlemen of the long robe. The jury, however, after they had been out about half an hour, brought him in guilty. The women who were the witnesses were infamous persons, laden with the guilt of many perjuries, which might easily have been proved against them before the trial, could justice have been obtained; but they were screened by the recorder, who was the person that laid the whole scheme, and patched up the indictment, in terms suited to his known abilities. But such of them as could be met with were afterwards convicted of perjury; and Smith, the chief witness, was pilloried before the Exchange. Sir John Talbot, who was present, represented to the King the state of the case as it appeared on the trial, who ordered Jefferies to find some evasion. Whereupon he assigned him counsel afterwards to plead to the insufficiency of the indictment, in arrest of judgment, and the king gave him his pardon, after which he was discharged. [g]

The issue of Roswell's trial, though a kind of triumph, led to no mitigation of the treatment of others. Baxter still continued to lie under bond, and even that did not satisfy his persecutors. "On the 11th of December, 1684," he says, "I was forced, in all my pain and weakness, to be carried to the sessions-house, or else my bonds of four hundred pounds would have been judged forfeit. The more moderate justices, who promised my discharge, would none of them be there, but left the work to Sir William Smith and the rest; who openly declared that they had nothing against me, and took me for innocent; but that I must continue bound lest others should expect to be discharged also; which I openly refused. My sureties, however, would be bound,

[g] Calamy. vol. i. pp. 363—365.

against my declared will, lest I should die in jail, and so I must continue. Yet they discharged others as soon as I was gone. I was told that they did all by instructions from ——— and that the main end was to restrain me from writing; which now should I do with the greatest caution, they will pick out something that a jury may take for a breach of my bonds.

"January 17th, I was forced again to be carried to the sessions, and after divers good words, which put me in expectation of freedom, when I was gone, one Justice Deerham said, that it was likely these persons solicited for my freedom that they might hear me in conventicles. On that they bound me again in a four hundred pound bond for above a quarter of a year; and so it is like it will be till I die, or worse; though no one ever accused me for any conventicle or preaching since they took all my books and goods about two years ago, and I for the most part keep my bed.

"Mr. Jenkins died in Newgate this week, January 19th, 1684-5, as Mr. Bampfield, Mr. Raphson, and others, died lately before him. The prison where so many are, suffocateth the spirits of aged ministers; but blessed be God, that gave them so long time to preach before, at cheaper rates. One Richard Baxter, a Sabbatarian Anabaptist, was sent to jail for refusing the oath of allegiance, and it went current that it was I. As to the present state of England,—the plots; the execution of men high and low; the public counsels and designs; the qualities and practice of judges and bishops; the sessions and justices; the quality of the clergy, and the universities and patrons; the church government by lay civilians; the usage of ministers and private meetings for preaching or prayer; the expectations of what is next to be done, &c.:—the reader must expect none of this sort of history from me. No doubt there will be many volumes of it transmitted by others to posterity; who may do it more fully than I can now do."[h]

Thus Baxter concludes the interesting memorials which he has left of his own age and life. The darkness was now increased till it had spread universal gloom and despondency. Private meetings were occasionally held to consider whether any hope remained, or what could be done to prevent the entire ruin of the religion and liberties of the country. But though these were managed with the greatest possible caution, and the parties

[h] Life, part iii. pp. 199, 200.

generally proceeded no farther than to mourn over the past, and dwell in gloomy forebodings over the prospect of the future, the consequences to some of them were most disastrous. Plots and conspiracies were hatched to ensnare the innocent and terrify the timid. The death, or rather murder, of Lord William Russell, the Earl of Essex, and Algernon Sydney, to which Baxter probably alludes, seemed like putting the extinguisher on the last hopes of freedom, and preparing the country for the most absolute despotism. The corporation of London was deprived of its charter, and other towns shared in its fate. Enormous and ruinous fines were levied. The judges prostituted their authority and influence to promote the corrupt designs of the court. Juries were browbeaten, and frightened into verdicts which were neither according to law nor justice. The clergy in general, were either timid and truckling, or destitute of sufficient influence to resist the rapid advances which were making towards Rome. The Nonconformists, oppressed and dispirited, finding complaint unavailing, and redress hopeless, surrendered themselves to suffering, till, if it were the will of God, deliverance should be afforded them. The reign of Charles, as it approached its termination, only increased in gloom and oppression, while the prospect of his successor filled all men's hearts with dismay and terror. It was indeed a period of "trouble and darkness, and dimness of anguish."

In these circumstances, Charles II. was called, unexpectedly, to give in his account, on the 6th of February, 1684-5. His character is familiar to every reader of English history; most of whom will agree, that he was one of the greatest curses to the nation that ever occupied the throne. His father and brother had some redeeming qualities in their character, while their fate will always render them objects of pity. The former was a good husband and father; the latter sacrificed his throne to his superstition. But Charles the Second had neither the personal virtues of the one, nor the superstitious regard to religion of the other. He was as worthless as a man as he was unprincipled as a sovereign. He was gay, affable, and witty; but he was heartless, profane, and licentious: equally regardless of his own honour, as of his country's good. What had happened to his father, and all he had suffered during his own exile, seem to have produced no salutary influence on his principles or dispositions. Every thing was made subservient to the love and enjoyment of pleasure. His ambition was directed solely against

his own subjects; and his desire of power was unmixed with the love of glory. His court was little better than a brothel. He sacrificed the morals, the honour, and the happiness, of his country, to his mistresses and his licentious courtiers. Such a man's pretension to religion, in any form, is offensive to decency and common sense. He was an infidel while he lived in pleasure; and only the fear of death drove him to that system of iniquity which pretends to provide a healing balsam, but which is only a poisonous opiate to the soul of a dying profligate. The mind turns away with sickness and horror from such a death-bed scene as that of Charles II.[1]

The prospects of the poor Nonconformists on the ascension of James to the vacant throne, were far from flattering. His well-known attachment and devotedness to Popery, promised nothing but ruin to what remained of the religion and liberty of the country; while the decided part which the Nonconformists had taken in every measure which tended to limit his power, or to exclude him from the throne, marked them out to be the objects of his implacable hatred and revenge. Pretexts would not be wanting, and he was already furnished with instruments prepared to carry forward and execute any oppressive and cruel measure. Here I cannot deny myself the pleasure of introducing the account given by Mr. Fox, of the conduct of the court towards the dissenters; his character of Jefferies, and his remarks on the character and trial of Baxter. It does great credit to the discernment and candour of that eminent man.

"Partly from similar motives, and partly to gratify the natural vindictiveness of his temper, James persevered in a most cruel persecution of the Protestant dissenters, upon the most frivolous pretences. The courts of justice, as in Charles's days,

[1] There are two accounts of the death-bed of Charles; the one by Protestants, the other by Roman Catholics. The former may be called his Protestant death, when he was attended by the bishops, who spoke to him as the Lord's anointed, and requested his blessing. Bishop Ken absolved him from his sins in the presence of his mistress and his illegitimate offspring. The Catholic death is described by Father Hudleston, who attended and officiated in the last ceremonies of the church. From this it is very certain that Charles died a Roman Catholic; which in fact he had been before the restoration, whatever he had pretended to be to the Nonconformists and the Church of England. Both the Popish and the Protestant death of Charles are recorded by Burnet, ii. pp. 456—460. Ellis, in the first series of his letters on English history, has given an account of the Protestant death of the king, by the chaplain to the Bishop of Ely, who was then in the room. Vol. iii. p. 333. In the second series he has given Hudleston's account of the Popish death. Vol. iv. pp. 78, 80.

were instruments equally ready, either for seconding the policy, or for gratifying the bad passions, of the monarch; and Jefferies, whom the late king had appointed chief justice of England a little before Sidney's trial, was a man entirely agreeable to the temper, and suitable to the purposes, of the present government. He was thought not to be very learned in his profession; but what might be wanting in knowledge, he made up in positiveness; and, indeed, whatever might be the difficulties in questions between one subject and another, the fashionable doctrine which prevailed at that time, of supporting the king's prerogative in its full extent, and without restriction or limitation, rendered, to such as espoused it, all that branch of law which is called constitutional, extremely easy and simple. He was as submissive and mean to those above him, as he was haughty and insolent to those who were in any degree in his power; and if, in his own conduct, he did not exhibit a very nice regard for morality, or even for decency, he never failed to animadvert upon, and to punish, the most slight deviation in others, with the utmost severity, especially if they were persons whom he suspected to be no favourites of the court.

"Before this magistrate was brought for trial, by a jury sufficiently prepossessed in favour of tory politics, the Reverend Richard Baxter, a dissenting minister, a pious and learned man, of exemplary character, always remarkable for his attachment to monarchy, and for leaning to moderate measures in the differences between the church and those of his persuasion. The pretence of this prosecution was a supposed reference of some passages in one of his works to the bishops of the church of England; a reference which was certainly not intended by him, and which could not have been made out to any jury that had been less prejudiced or under any other direction than that of Jefferies. The real motive was the desire of punishing an eminent dissenting teacher, whose reputation was high among his sect, and who was supposed to favour the political opinions of the whigs."[k]

Thus far Mr. Fox. That Baxter was not a whig was well known at court; and that his sentiments as a dissenter were considered to be very moderate, can as little be doubted. The design unquestionably was to strike terror into all the Nonconformists, by severely punishing one of their leading ministers, who might be regarded, in point of sentiment, as less obnoxious than most of his brethren. If Baxter must be thus treated, who

[k] Fox's 'History of the Reign of James II.' pp. 101—103.

can be safe; if a harmless, uncontroversial paraphrase on the Scriptures be construed into a libel, it must be impossible either to state our sentiments or defend them, without bringing down upon us the heavy arm of the law. These must have been the views of the court, and the reasonings of the dissenters respecting this affair. The malignant designs of the one, however, and the fears of the other, were finally disappointed.

As the trial of Baxter, for the sentiments expressed in his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,'[1] is among the most extraordinary circumstances of his life, and one of the most curious specimens of the style in which justice was administered by the monster who then presided over the justice of his country, it is much to be regretted that we have not an account of it, either by Baxter himself, or more correctly reported by those who were present. No printed report of the trial exists, except what is contained in Calamy's abridgment of Baxter's life. The report in the 'State Trials' is merely a copy of that. Among the Baxter MSS. in Redcross Street Library, however, there is a letter from a person who was present at the trial, which was sent to Sylvester, with a view to its being used by him. From this document, and Calamy together, I have endeavoured to give a fuller account, though it is still imperfect, than has hitherto been laid before the public, of this remarkable affair.

That he was designed for jail before the death of Charles, was intimated by the Duke of York; so, to secure him till they could find matter of accusation against him, he was bound to his good behaviour. They declared, at the same time, that they considered him innocent, but did this for security, and till they were prepared.[m]

On the 28th of February, Baxter was committed to the King's-Bench prison, by warrant of Lord Chief Justice Jefferies, for his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' which had been printed a little before; and which was described as a scandalous and seditious book against the government. On his commitment by the chief justice's warrant, he applied for a *habeas corpus*, and having obtained it, he absconded into the country to avoid imprisonment, till the term approached. He was induced to do this from the constant pain he endured, and an apprehension that he could not bear the confinement of a prison.

On the 6th of May, which was the first day of the term,

[1] A particular account of the 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' will be found in the second part of this work.

[m] Penitent Confessions, p. 40.

he appeared in Westminster Hall, and an information was then ordered to be drawn up against him. On the 14th of May, he pleaded not guilty, to the information. On the 18th of the same month, being much indisposed, it was moved that he might have further time given him before his trial, but this was denied him. He moved for it by his counsel; but Jefferies cried out, in a passion, 'I will not give him a minute's time more, to save his life. We have had to do,' said he, 'with other sorts of persons, but now we have a saint to deal with; and I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners. Yonder,' said he, 'stands Oates in the pillory' (as he actually did at that very time in the New Palace Yard), 'and he says he suffers for the truth, and so says Baxter; but if Baxter did but stand on the other side of the pillory with him, I would say, two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there.' °

The following is a copy of the indictment, which, from its singular nature, I have preferred giving in its original state to a translation. Even the mere English reader will have little difficulty in understanding its scope, and the substance of its meaning, as it is so much interlarded with quotations from the Paraphrase :—

" Quod Richardus Baxter, nuper de, &c., Clericus existens person' seditiosa et factiosa, pravæ mentis, impiæ, inquietæ, turbulent' disposition' et conversation', ac machinans, practicans et intendens, quantum in ipso fuit, non solem pacem et communem tranquillitat'dict' Dom' Regis infra, hoc regnum Angl' inquietare, molestare et perturbare, ac seditionem, discord' et malevolent' int' ligeos et fideles subdit' dict' Dom' Regis movere, p'curare et excitare, verum etiam sinceram, piam, beatam, et pacificam Protestan' Religion' infra hoc regn' Angl' usitat', ac Prelat', Episcopos, aliosq; Clericos in Ecclesia Anglicana legibus hujus regni Angl' stabilit', ac Novum Testamentu' Dom' Salvator' nostri Jesu Christi in contempt' et vilipend' inducere et inutile reddere; quodq; p'd' R. B. ad nequissimas, nefandissimas et diabolicas intention' suas, pred' perimplend' perficiend' et ad effect' redigend' 14 die Febr', anno regni dict Dom' Jacobi Secundi, &c. primo, vi et armis, &c. apud, &c. falso illicite, injuste, nequit', factiose, seditiose et irreligiose fecit, composuit, scripsit, impressit et publicavit, et fieri, componi,

° Colonel Dangerfield had been tried before Jefferies, and condemned to be whipped that morning at Westminster Hall, for the Meal-Tub plot; so that Jefferies was quite in a whipping humour.

scribi, imprimi et publicari causavit, quendam falsum, seditiosum, libellosum, factiosum et irreligiosum librum, intitulat' *A Paraphrase on the Testament, with Notes doctrinal and practical:* In quo quidem, falso, seditioso, libelloso, factioso et irreligioso libro int' al' content' fuer' hæ falsæ, factiosæ malitiosæ scandalosæ, et seditiosæ sententiæ de eisdem Prelat' Episcopis, aliisq; Clericis Ecclesiæ hujus regn' in his Anglican' verbis sequen', videl't, Note, *Are not these Preachers and Prelates* (Epòs aliosq; Clericos, præd' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuend') *then the least and basest that preach and tread down Christian love of all that dissent from any of their presumptions, and so preach down not the least, but the great command?* Et ult' idem Attorn' dict Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in p'd' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, int' al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ sentent' sequent' de Clericis Ecclesiæ hujus regn', videl't, Note, *It is folly to doubt whether there be Devils, while Devils incarnate live here amongst us* (Clericos pred' hujus regni Angl' innuendo); *What else but Devils, sure, could make ceremonious hypocrites* (Clericos pred' innuendo) *consult with Politic Royalists* (ligeos et fidel' subdit' dict' Dom' Regis hujus regni Angl' innuendo) *to destroy the Son of God for saving men's health and lives by miracle?* Quære, *Whether, if this withered hand had been their own, they would have plotted to kill him, that would have cured them by a miracle, as a Sabbath-Breaker? And whether their successors* (Prelat', Episcopos, Aliosq; Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regni Angl' qui deinceps fuerint innuendo) *would silence and imprison godly ministers* (seipsum R. B. et al' factiosas et seditias as p'son' infra hoc regn' Angl' contra leges hujus regni ac Liturg' Ecclesiæ infra hoc reg' stabilit' p'dican' innuendo) *if they could cure them of all their sicknesses, and help them to preferment, and give them money to feed their lusts?* Et ult' idem Attorn' dict Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in pred' falso, libelloso, scandaloso et irreligioso libro inter al' content' fuer' hæ al falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ Anglican' sentent' sequen' de et concernen' Ep'is p'd' et Ministris Justitiæ hujus regn' Angl', videl't, Note, *Men that preach in Christ's name* (seipsum R. B. et al' factiosas et seditiosas p'son' infra hoc regn' Angl' contra leges hujus regn' Angl' et Liturg' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' per legem stabilit' pred'

innuendo) *therefore are not to be silenced, though faulty, if they* (pred malæ dispo' it factiosas et seditiosas person' pred' iterum innuendo) *do more good than harm; dreadful, then, is the case of them* (Episcopos et Ministros Justitiæ infra hoc regn' Angl' innuendo) *that silence Christ's faithful ministers* (seipsum R. B. et al' seditiosas et factiosas person' pred' innuendo). Et ulterius idem Attorn' dict' Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod ad excitand' popul' hujus regn' Angl' in illicit' Conventicul convenire et defamand' Justit' hujus regn' impuniendo illicit' Conventicul', in al' loco in pred' falso, scandaloso, seditioso, et irreligioso libro, nit' al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, scandalosæ, libellosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ Anglican' sentent' sequen', videl't, (1) Note, *It was well that they considered what might be said against them, which now most Christians do not in their disputes.* (2) *These Persecutors, and the Romans, had some charity and consideration, in that they were restrained by the fear of the people, and did not accuse and fine them as for Routs, Riots, and Seditions.* (3) *They that deny necessary premises are not to be disputed with.* Et ulterius idem Attorn' dict' Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege' dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari quod in al' loco in pred' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, intal' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ Anglican' Sententiæ sequent' de et concernen' Episcopis et al' Clericis hujus regn' Angl', videl't, (3) *Let not those proud hypocrites* (Episcopos et al' Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *deceive you* (subdit' dicti Dom' Regis hujus regn' Angl innuendo) *who by their long Liturgies and Ceremonies,* (Liturg' et Ceremon' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo,) *and claim of Superiority, do but cloak their Worldliness, Pride, and Oppression, and are religious to their greater Damnation.* Et ulterius idem Attorn' dicti Dom Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in pred' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro int'al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ, et religiosæ, Sentent' Anglican' sequent' de et concernen' Clericis hujus regn' Angl', (2) Note, *Priests now are many* (Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *but Labourers few; what men are they that have and do silence the faithfullest labourers* (seipsum R. B. et al' facti' as et sedit' as p' son' pred' innuendo) *suspecting that they are not for their Interest?* (interesse Clericor' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo). Et ulterius idem Attorn' dicti' Dom' Regis nunc gene-

ral' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in pred' falso scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, inter al' content' fuerunt hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ sentent' sequen' de et concernen' Clericis hujus regn' Angl', videl't, (3) Note, *Christ's Ministers use God's ordinances to save Men, and the Devil's Clergy* (Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *use them for Snares, Mischief, and Murder.* (2) *They* (Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *will not let the people be Neuters between God and the Devil, but force them* (subdit hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *to be informing Persecutors.* Et ulterius idem Attorn' dicti' Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Car' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in præd' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, int' al' content' fuerunt hæ aliæ falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ sententiæ Anglicanæ sequen' de et concernen' legibus hujus regn' Angl' contra illicit' Conventicul', et ad excitand' popul' convenire in illicit' Conventical', videl't, (2) Note, *To be Dissenters and Disputants, against errors and tyrannical impositions, upon conscience* (leges et statut' hujus regn' Angl' contra person' factios' et Liturg' Eccl' hujus regn' Angl' adversar' Anglice), *against Dissenters* (edit' et provis' innuendo), *is no Fault, but a great Duty.* In magnam Dei omnipotent' displicent' in contempt' leg' hujus regn' Angl' manifest' in malum et pernitiosissim exemplum omniu' al' in tali casu delinquen' ac contra pacem dicti Dom' Regis nunc, coron' et dignitat' suas, &c. Unde idem Attorn' dicti Dom' Regis nunc general pro eodem Dom' Rege pet' advisament' Cur' hic in premiss' et debit' legis process' versus ipsum prefat R. B. in hac parte fieri ad respond' dicto Dom' Regi de et in premiss, &c."

On May the 30th, in the afternoon,[n] Baxter was brought to trial, before the lord chief justice, at Guildhall. Sir Henry Ashurst, who would not forsake his own and his father's friend, stood by him all the while. Baxter came first into court, and, with all the marks of sincerity and composure, waited for the coming of the lord chief justice, who appeared quickly after, with great indignation in his face.

"When I saw," says an eye-witness, "the meek man stand before the flaming eyes and fierce looks of this bigot, I thought of Paul standing before Nero. The barbarous usage which he

[n] Hargreaves' State Trials, vol. x. App. p. (37). The Editor expresses his regret that no account of this trial exists, except what is given by Calamy. He says, "It shows the temper of the chief justice, and the cruel usage of the prisoner."

received drew plenty of tears from my eyes, as well as from others of the auditors and spectators: yet I could not but smile sometimes, when I saw my lord imitate our modern pulpit drollery, which some one saith any man engaged in such a design would not lose for a world. He drove on furiously, like Hannibal over the Alps, with fire and vinegar, pouring all the contempt and scorn upon Baxter, as if he had been a link-boy or knave; which made the people who could not come near enough to hear the indictment or Mr. Baxter's plea, cry out, 'Surely, this Baxter had burned the city or the temple of Delphos.' But others said, it was not the custom, now-a-days, to receive ill, except for doing well; and therefore this must needs be some good man that my lord so rails at." [p]

Jefferies no sooner sat down than a short cause was called and tried; after which the clerk began to read the title of another cause. 'You blockhead, you,' said Jefferies, 'the next cause is between Richard Baxter and the king:' upon which Baxter's cause was called.

On the jury being sworn, Baxter objected to them, as incompetent to his trial, owing to its peculiar nature. The jurymen being tradesmen, and not scholars, he alleged they were incapable of pronouncing whether his 'Paraphrase' was, or was not, according to the original text. He therefore prayed that he might have a jury of learned men, though the one-half of them should be Papists. This objection, as might have been expected, was overruled by the court.[q]

The passages contained in the indictment, were, it is understood, picked out by Sir Roger L'Estrange and some of his associates: and a certain noted clergyman, who is supposed to have been Dr. Sherlock, put into the hands of his enemies some accusations out of Rom. xiii., &c. as against the king, which might have affected his life; but no use was made of them. The great charge was, that, in these several passages, he reflected on the prelates of the church of England, and so was guilty of sedition.[r]

[p] Baxter MSS. [q] Ibid.

[r] As the 'Paraphrase' is not in every body's hands, I have extracted the passages and notes referred to in the indictment, and placed them together, that the readers may have fairly and fully before them the grounds on which the charge of sedition was preferred. Some of the phraseology is pointed and severe, characteristic of Baxter's style, but all justly called for by the treatment which he and others had experienced.

Matt. v. 19. "If any shall presume to break the least of these commands, because it is a little one, and teach men so to do, he shall be vilified as he vilified God's law, and not thought fit for a place in the kingdom of the Messiah;

The king's counsel opened the information at large, with its aggravations. Mr. Pollexfen, Mr. Wallop, Mr. Williams, Mr. Rotherham, Mr. Atwood, and Mr. Phipps, were Baxter's counsel, and had been fee'd by Sir Henry Ashurst.

Pollexfen then rose and addressed the court and the jury. He stated that he was counsel for the prisoner, and felt that he

but he shall be there greatest that is most exact in *doing* and *teaching* all the law of God."

Note.—"Are not those preachers and prelates, then, the *least* and basest, that preach and tread down Christian love of all that dissent from any of their presumptions, and so preach down, not the *least*, but the *great* command."

Mark iii. 6. "It is folly to doubt whether there be devils, while devils incarnate dwell among us. What else but devils, sure, could ceremonious hypocrites consult with politic royalists to destroy the Son of God, for saving men's health and lives by miracle? Query: Whether this withered hand had been their own, they would have plotted to kill him that would have cured them by miracle, as a sabbath-breaker? And whether their successors would silence and imprison godly ministers, if they could cure them of all their sicknesses, help them to preferment, and give them money to feed their lusts?"

Mark ix. 39. *Note.*—"Men that preach in Christ's name, therefore, are not to be silenced, though faulty: if they do more good than harm, dreadful, then, is the case of them that silence Christ's faithful ministers."

Mark xi. 31. *Note.*—"It was well that they considered what might be said against them, which now most Christians do not in their disputes. These persecutors, and the Romans, had some charity and consideration, in that they were restrained by the fear of 'the people, and did not accuse and fine them, as for routs, riots, and seditions.'"

Mark xii. 38—40. *Note.*—"Let not these proud hypocrites deceive you, who, by their long liturgies and ceremonies, and claim of superiority, do but cloak their worldliness, pride, and oppression, and are religious to their greater damnation."

Luke x. 2. *Note.*—"Priests now are many, but labourers are few. What men are they that hate and silence the faithfullest labourers, suspecting that they are not for their interest?"

John xi. 57. *Note*—"1. Christ's ministers are God's ordinances to save men, and the devil's clergy use them for snares, mischief, and murder. 2. They will not let the people be neuters between God and the devil, but force them to be informing persecutors."

Acts xv. 2. *Note.*—"1. To be dissenters and disputants against errors and tyrannical impositions upon conscience is no fault, but a great duty. 2. It is but a groundless fiction of some that tell us that this was an appeal to Jerusalem, because it was the metropolis of Syria and Antioch, as if the metropolitan church power had been then settled; when, long after, when it was devised, indeed, Antioch was above Jerusalem; and it is as vain a fiction that this was an appeal to a general council, as if the apostles and elders at Jerusalem had been a general council, when none of the bishops of the gentile churches were there, or called thither. It is notorious that it was an appeal to the apostles, taking in the elders, as those that had the most certain notice of Christ's mind, having conversed with him, and being intrusted to teach all nations whatever he commanded them, and had the greatest measure of the Spirit; and also, being Jews themselves, were such as the Judaising Christians had no reason to suspect or reject."—*Baxter's New Testament* in locis.

had a very unusual plea to manage. He had been obliged, he said, by the nature of the cause, to consult all our learned commentators, many of whom, learned, pious, and belonging to the church of England, too, concurred with Mr. Baxter in his paraphrase of those passages of Scripture which were objected to in the indictment, and by whose help he would be enabled to manage his client's cause. "I shall begin," said he, "with Dr. Hammond; and, gentlemen, though Mr. Baxter made an objection against you, as not fit judges of Greek, which has been overruled, I hope you understand English, common sense, and can read." To which the foreman of the jury made a profound bow, and said, "Yes, sir."

On this his lordship burst upon Pollexfen, like a fury, and told him he should not sit there to hear him preach. "No, my lord," said Pollexfen, "I am counsel for Mr. Baxter, and shall offer nothing but what is *ad rem.*" "Why, this is not," said Jefferies, "that you cant to the jury beforehand." "I beg your lordship's pardon," said the counsel, "and shall then proceed to business." "Come, then," said Jefferies, "what do you say to this count: read it, clerk:" referring to the paraphrase on Mark xii. 38—40. "Is he not, now, an old knave, to interpret this as belonging to liturgies?" "So do others," replied Pollexfen, "of the church of England, who would be loth so to wrong the cause of liturgies as to make them a novel invention, or not to be able to date them as early as the Scribes and Pharisees." "No, no, Mr. Pollexfen," said the judge: "they were long-winded, extempore prayers, such as they used to say when they appropriated God to themselves: 'Lord, we are thy people, thy peculiar people, thy dear people.'" And then he snorted, and squeaked through his nose, and clenched his hands, and lifted up his eyes, mimicking their manner, and running on furiously, as he said they used to pray. But old Pollexfen gave him a bite now and then, though he could hardly get in a word. "Why, my lord," said he, "some will think it is hard measure to stop these men's mouths, and not let them speak through their noses." "Pollexfen," said Jefferies, "I know you well; I will set a mark upon you: you are the patron of the faction. This is an old rogue, who has poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. Don't we know how he preached formerly, 'Curse ye Meroz; curse them bitterly that come not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' He encouraged all the women and maids to bring their bodkins

and thimbles to carry on their war against the king of ever blessed memory. An old schismatical knave, a hypocritical villain!"

"I beseech your lordship," said Pollexfen, "suffer me a word for my client. It is well known to all intelligent men of age in this nation, that these things do not apply to the character of Mr. Baxter, who wished as well to the king and royal family as Mr. Love, who lost his head for endeavouring to bring in the son long before he was restored. And, my lord, Mr. Baxter's loyal and peaceable spirit, King Charles would have rewarded with a bishoprick, when he came in, if he would have conformed."

"Aye, aye," said the judge, "we know that; but what ailed the old blockhead, the unthankful villain, that he would not conform? Was he wiser or better than other men? He hath been, ever since, the spring of the faction. I am sure he hath poisoned the world with his linsey-woolsey doctrine." Here his rage increased to an amazing degree. He called Baxter a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog. "Hang him," said he; "this one old fellow hath cast more reproach upon the constitution and discipline of our church than will be wiped off this hundred years; but I'll handle him for it: for, by G——, he deserves to be whipped through the city."

"My lord," said Pollexfen, "I am sure these things are not *ad rem.* Some persons think, my lord, it is very hard these men should be forced against their consciences from the church. But that is not my business, my lord. I am not to justify their nonconformity, or give here the reasons of their scruples to accept beneficial places, but rather to suffer any thing. I know not, my lord, what reasons sway other men's consciences; my business is to plead for my client, and to answer the charge of dangerous sedition, which is alleged to be contained in his 'Paraphrase of the New Testament.'[s]

[s] Baxter MSS. Pollexfen, who acted as first counsel in the trial of Baxter, is not mentioned at all in Calamy's account of the trial. The whole that I have given above is contained in the manuscript account furnished by a person who was present. As far as it proceeds in the remainder of the narrative it agrees with Calamy. Pollexfen was descended from a good family in Devonshire, and rose to the highest rank in his profession. He was counsel for the Earl of Danby, in 1679, was employed by the Corporation of London, in the affair of their charter, and was one of the counsel retained for the bishops. He was knighted after the Revolution, and made chief justice of the Common Pleas. He died in 1692.—*Noble's Continuation of Granger*, vol. i. p. 170.

Mr. Wallop said, that he conceived, the matter depending being a point of doctrine, it ought to be referred to the bishop his ordinary; but if not, he humbly conceived the doctrine was innocent and justifiable, setting aside the inuendos, for which there was no colour, there being no antecedent to refer them to (i. e. no bishop or clergy of the church of England named); he said the book accused, i. e. the 'Comment on the New Testament,' contained many eternal truths: but they who drew the information were the libellers, in applying to the prelates of the church of England, those severe things which were written concerning some prelates who deserved the characters which he gave. "My lord," said he, "I humbly conceive the bishops Mr. Baxter speaks of, as your lordship, if you have read church history, must confess, were the plagues of the church and of the world."

"Mr. Wallop," said the lord chief justice, "I observe you are in all these dirty causes: and were it not for you gentlemen of the long robe, who should have more wit and honesty than to support and hold up these factious knaves by the chin, we should not be at the pass we are." "My lord," replied Wallop, "I humbly conceive that the passages accused are natural deductions from the text." "You humbly conceive," said Jefferies, "and I humbly conceive. Swear him, swear him." "My lord," said he, "under favour, I am counsel for the defendant, and if I understand either Latin or English, the information now brought against Mr. Baxter upon such a slight ground, is a greater reflection upon the church of England, than any thing contained in the book he is accused for." "Sometimes you humbly conceive, and sometimes you are very positive," said Jefferies; "you talk of your skill in church history, and of your understanding Latin and English; I think I understand something of them as well as you; but, in short, must tell you, that if you do not understand your duty better, I shall teach it you." Upon which Mr. Wallop sat down.

Mr. Rotherham urged, "that if Mr. Baxter's book had sharp reflections upon the church of Rome by name, but spake well of the prelates of the church of England, it was to be presumed, that the sharp reflections were intended only against the prelates of the church of Rome." The lord chief justice said, "Baxter was an enemy to the name and thing, the office and persons, of bishops." Rotherham added, "that Baxter frequently

attended divine service, went to the sacrament, and persuaded others to do so too, as was certainly and publicly known; and had, in the very book so charged, spoken very moderately and honourably of the bishops of the church of England."

Baxter added, "My lord, I have been so moderate with respect to the church of England, that I have incurred the censure of many of the dissenters upon that account." "Baxter for bishops!" exclaimed Jefferies, "that is a merry conceit indeed: turn to it, turn to it." Upon this, Rotherham turned to a place where it is said, "that great respect is due to those truly called to be bishops among us;" or to that purpose: "Aye," said Jefferies, "this is your Presbyterian cant; truly called to be bishops: that is himself, and such rascals, called to be bishops of Kidderminster, and other such places. Bishops set apart by such factious, snivelling Presbyterians as himself: a Kidderminster bishop he means. According to the saying of a late learned author—And every parish shall maintain a tithe pig metropolitan."

Baxter beginning to speak again, Jefferies reviled him; "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the Gospel of peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave: it is time for thee to begin to think what account thou intendest to give. But leave thee to thyself, and I see thou'lt go on as thou hast begun; but, by the grace of God, I'll look after thee. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what will become of their mighty Don, and a Doctor of the party (looking to Dr. Bates) at your elbow; but, by the grace of Almighty God, I'll crush you all. Come, what do you say for yourself, you old knave; come, speak up. What doth he say? I am not afraid of you, for all the snivelling calves you have got about you:" alluding to some persons who were in tears about Mr. Baxter. "Your lordship need not," said the holy man; "for I'll not hurt you. But these things will surely be understood one day; what fools one sort of Protestants are made, to persecute the other." And lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, "I am not concerned to an-

swer such stuff; but am ready to produce my writings for the confutation of all this; and my life and conversation are known to many in this nation." [t]

Mr. Rotherham sitting down, Mr. Atwood began to show, that not one of the passages mentioned in the information ought to be strained to the sense which was put upon them by the inuendos; they being more natural when taken in a milder sense: nor could any one of them be applied to the prelates of the church of England, without a very forced construction. To prove this, he would have read some of the text: but Jefferies cried out, "You shan't draw me into a conventicle with your annotations, nor your snivelling parson, neither." "My lord," said Mr. Atwood, "that I may use the best authority, permit me to repeat your lordship's own words in that case." "No, you shan't," said he: "you need not speak, for you are an author already; though you speak and write impertinently." Atwood replied, "I can't help that, my lord, if my talent be no better, but it is my duty to do my best for my client."

Jefferies then went on inveighing against what Atwood had published; and Atwood justified it as in defence of the English constitution, declaring that he never disowned any thing that he had written. Jefferies, several times, ordered him to sit down; but he still went on. "My lord," said he, "I have matter of law to urge for my client." He then proceeded to cite several cases wherein it had been adjudged that words ought to be taken in the milder sense, and not to be strained by inuendos. 'Well,' said Jefferies, when he had done, 'you have had your say.'

Mr. Williams and Mr. Phipps said nothing, for they saw it was to no purpose. At last, Baxter himself said, "My lord, I think I can clearly answer all that is laid to my charge, and I shall do it briefly. The sum is contained in these few papers, to which I shall add a little by testimony." But he would not hear a word. At length, the chief justice summed up the matter in a long and fulsome harangue. "It was notoriously known," he said, "there had been a design to ruin the king and the nation.. The old game had been renewed; and this person had been the main incendiary. He is as modest now as can be; but time was, when no man was so ready at, 'Bind your kings in chains, and your nobles in fetters of iron;' and 'To your tents, O Israel.' Gentlemen, for God's sake, don't let us be gulled

[t] Baxter's MSS.

twice in an age." And when he concluded, he told the jury, "that if they in their consciences believed he meant the bishops and clergy of the church of England, in the passages which the information referred to, and he could mean nothing else; they must find him guilty. If not, they must find him not guilty." When he had done, Baxter said to him, "Does your lordship think any jury will pretend to pass a verdict upon me upon such a trial?" "I'll warrant you, Mr. Baxter," said he; "don't you trouble yourself about that."

The jury immediately laid their heads together at the bar, and found him *guilty*. As he was going from the bar, Baxter told the lord chief justice, who had so loaded him with reproaches, and still continued them, that a predecessor of his, had had other thoughts of him; upon which he replied, "that there was not an honest man in England but what took him for a great knave." Baxter had subpœnaed several clergymen, who appeared in court, but were of no use to him, through the violence of the chief justice. The trial being over, Sir Henry Ashurst led him through the crowd, and conveyed him away in his coach.[u]

Between the time of his trial, and of his being brought up for sentence, Baxter employed what influence he possessed, to procure a more favourable result than he had reason to expect from the temper of Jefferies. He addressed himself to a nobleman of influence at court, whose name does not appear, and also to the Bishop of London, entreating them to interpose on his behalf. His letter to the bishop, is worthy of being inserted entire. It gives a calm and correct view of his case, shows his attachment to the church, the labour he had bestowed to promote its interests; and entreats that he might yet be heard before a more impartial and competent tribunal.

[u] Sir Henry Ashurst, who acted in this truly Christian and noble manner to Baxter, feeing his counsel, standing by him at his trial, and conveying him home in his own carriage, was the son of one of his oldest and best friends, and in all respects worthy of the family whose honours he sustained and increased. He married Lady Diana, the fifth daughter of William Lord Paget, by whom he had several children. She died in August, 1707, when a funeral sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Richard Mayo. Sir Henry was the intimate friend and correspondent of the Rev. Philip Henry. He published a short life of the Rev. Nathaniel Heywood, the ejected minister of Ormskirk, which shows that he was not ashamed of his connexion with that despised race of confessors. Sir Henry died at his seat at Waterstoke, near Coventry, on the 13th of April, 1710-11.—See the Lives of Philip and Mathew Henry, by Mr. Williams.

"My Lord,

"Being by episcopal ordination vowed to the sacred ministry, and bound not to desert it, when by painful diseases and debility I waited for my change, I durst not spend my last days in idleness, and knew not how better to serve the church than by writing a 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' purposely fitted to the use of the most ignorant, and the reconciling of doctrinal differences about texts variously expounded. Far was it from my design to reproach the church, or draw men from it, having therein pleaded for diocesans as successors of the apostles over many churches; though I confute the overthrowing opinion which setteth them over but one church, denying the parishes to be churches. But some persons offended, it is like, at some other passages in the book, have thought fit to say that I scandalised the church of England; and an information being exhibited in the King's Bench, at a trial before a common jury, on my owning the book, they forthwith found me guilty without hearing my defence, and I have cause to expect a severe judgment, the beginning of the next term. All this is on a charge that my unquestionable words were meant by me to scandalise the church, which I utterly deny. If God will have me end a painful, weary life, by such a suffering, I hope I shall finish my course with joy; but my conscience commandeth me to value the church's strength and honour before my life, and I ought not to be silent under the scandal of suffering as an enemy to it. Nor would I have my sufferings increase men's prejudice against it. I have lived in its communion, and conformed to as much as the Act of Uniformity obliged one in my condition; I have drawn multitudes into the church, and written to justify the church and ministry against separation, when the Paraphrase was in the press: and my displeasing writings (whose eagerness and faults I justify not) have been my earnest pleadings for the healing of a divided people, and the strengthening of the church by love and concord on possible terms. I owe satisfaction to you that are my diocesan, and therefore presume to send you a copy of the information against me, and my answer to the particular accusations; humbly entreating you to spare so much time from your weighty business as to peruse them, or to refer them to be perused for your satisfaction. I would fain send with them one sheet, (in vindication of my accused life and loyalty, and of positive proofs that I meant not to accuse the church of England, and of the danger of exposing the clergy to charges of thoughts

and meanings as prejudice shall conjecture,) but for fear of displeasing you by length. For expositions of Scripture to be thus tried by such juries, as often as they are but called seditious, is not the old way of managing church differences; and of what consequence you will easily judge. If your lordship be satisfied that I am no enemy to the church, and that my punishment will not be for its interest, I hope you will vouchsafe to present my petition to his majesty, that my appeal to the church may suspend the sentence till my diocesan, or whom his majesty shall appoint, may hear me, and report their sense of the cause. By which your lordship will, I doubt not, many ways serve the welfare of the church, as well as

"Oblige your languishing
"Humble Servant."[x]

It does not appear that these applications, or any other influence employed, was of much avail. It will not be thought that he received a mitigated sentence, though perhaps this was the case.

On the 29th of June, he had judgment given against him. He was fined five hundred marks, condemned to lie in prison till he paid it, and bound to his good behaviour for seven years. It is said that Jefferies proposed a corporal punishment, namely, whipping through the city; but his brethren would not accede to it. In consequence of which, the fine and imprisonment were agreed to.[y]

Thus ended this strange, comic tragedy; for such it must have appeared to be, even to the parties most deeply interested in the result. Had Jefferies intended to bring all law and justice into contempt, or to render judicial proceedings the object of disgust throughout the kingdom, he could not have adopted a more effectual method than the conduct he pursued at Baxter's trial. The apology which has sometimes been offered for this unjust judge, that his cruelties were perpetrated to please his royal master, will not, I am afraid, stand the test of a rigid examination. That James was cold, and cruel too, cannot be doubted; but the conduct of Jefferies on this and similar occasions, seems evidently to have arisen from his own nature, which was savage, vulgar, and unrelenting. He was a fit instrument for doing the work of a despotic government; but he was also admirably qualified for rendering that government an object of universal

[x] Baxter's MSS. [y] Ibid.

hatred and loathing. Nothing, probably, contributed more effectually to the downfall of James's authority, and the utter extinction of his influence in the country, than the brutal outrages of this man. They may be said to have commenced with his treatment of Baxter, and to have terminated with his western campaign. His track was marked with blood and murder, which at last brought down the vengeance of Heaven on his infatuated employers, and led to the final deliverance of his oppressed and injured country.

On the legal merits of Baxter's trial, there can now be but one opinion. It is highly probable, as has been already remarked, that he was singled out to be the first victim, and with a view of striking terror into all his brethren. His services to the church, by his writings in her defence, and by the division which he mainly contributed to keep up among the dissenters, were very considerable. If such a man, therefore, must be severely punished, and that for one of the least offensive of his publications, what might others expect? The notes fastened on, certainly contain no sedition. They do not even name the bishops, the constitution, or the services of the church of England. It was therefore entirely by *inuendo*, or insinuation, as the counsel alleged, that his words were construed to be an attack on the prelates and liturgy of the church. As he was a believer in bishops, and no enemy to a liturgy, he could only refer to unsuitable persons holding the office, or to the abuse of the forms of the church. To constitute allusions to such things in a commentary on the Scriptures, high legal offences, endangering the liberty or lives of the subjects, shows either that the court was at a loss for grounds of prosecution, or that even at this early period of James's reign, a deep-laid plot had been formed to ruin the dissenters, and, with them, the liberties of England.

At the end of the second edition of the Paraphrase, he left the following note to be inserted: "Reader,—It's like you have heard how I was, for this book, by the instigation of Sir Roger L'Estrange and some of the clergy, imprisoned nearly two years, by Sir George Jefferies, Sir Francis Wilkins, and the rest of the judges of the King's Bench, after their preparatory restraints, and attendance under the most reproachful words, as if I had been the most odious person living, and not suffered at all to speak for myself. Had not the king taken off my fine, I had continued in prison till death. Because many desire to know what all this was for, I have here written the eight accusations

which (after the great clergy search of my book) were brought in as seditious. I have altered never a word accused, that you may know the worst. What I said of the murderers of Christ, and the hypocrite Pharisees and their sins, the judge said I meant of the church of England, though I have written for it, and still communicate with it." Then follow the passages of Scripture, which have been given in a preceding note. "These," he adds, "were all, by one that knoweth his own name, put into their hands, with some accusations out of Rom. xiii., as against my life; but their discretion forbade them to use or name them."

The conduct of L'Estrange, in promoting the prosecution of Baxter, is only in harmony with other parts of his character.[1] He was one of the most unprincipled, mercenary scribblers of the age to which he belonged; a man who stuck at nothing which the interests of arbitrary power and high-church politics required. To such a man, Richard Baxter afforded delicious food: he had often before attacked him by his pen; he now employed a more formidable and dangerous weapon, the attorney-general and Lord Chief Justice Jefferies.

The conduct of the clergyman referred to, understood to be Dr. Sherlock, who suggested a charge of treason, founded on the annotations on the 13th chapter of the Romans, is more difficult to be accounted for. There was not sufficient ground for the charge, otherwise it would doubtless have been adopted. But what could instigate Sherlock to such a proceeding, affecting the life of a venerable servant of Christ, must be left to the disclosures of another day. We would hope Baxter may have

[1] Echard relates a curious anecdote of Baxter and L'Estrange. "When Dr. Sharp, afterwards archbishop of York, was rector of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, L'Estrange, Baxter, and the notorious Miles Pranse, who was convicted of perjury in the affair of Sir Edmund Godfrey, all approached the communion table, on a sacrament day; L'Estrange at one end, Pranse at the other, and Baxter in the middle. Baxter and Prance, from their situation, received before L'Estrange, who, when it came to his turn, taking the bread in his hand, asked the doctor if he knew who that man was, pointing to Pranse. To which the doctor answering in the negative, L'Estrange replied, 'That is Miles Pranse; and I here challenge him, and solemnly declare, before God and this congregation, that what that man hath sworn or published concerning me is totally and absolutely false; and may this sacrament be my damnation if all this declaration be not true.' Pranse was silent; Mr. Baxter took special notice of it; and Dr. Sharp declared he would have refused Pranse the sacrament, had the challenge been made in time."—*Echard's Church Hist.* What a scene this was for a communion table! I am surprised it did not for ever disgust Baxter at occasional conformity, and teach him the importance of knowing something about the persons with whom he held religious fellowship in this sacred ordinance. . . . . .

been under some mistake, and that Sherlock was not guilty of such base and atrocious conduct.

Baxter being unable to pay the fine, and aware that, though he did, he might soon be prosecuted again, on some equally unjust pretence, went to prison. Here he was visited by his friends, and even by some of the respectable clergy of the church, who sympathised with his sufferings, and deplored the injustice he received. He continued in this imprisonment nearly two years; during which he enjoyed more quietness than he had done for many years before.

An imprisonment of two years would have been found very trying and irksome to most men. To Baxter, however, it does not appear to have proved so painful, though he had now lost his beloved wife, who had frequently before been his companion in solitude and suffering. His friends do not appear to have neglected or forgotten him. The following extract of a letter from the well-known Matthew Henry, presents a pleasing view of the manner in which he endured bonds and afflictions for Christ's sake. It is addressed to his father, and dated the 17th of November, 1685, when Baxter had been several months confined. Mr. Williams justly remarks, "It is one of those pictures of days which are past, which, if rightly viewed, may produce lasting and beneficial effects: emotions of sacred sorrow for the iniquity of persecution; and animating praise, that the demon in these happy days of tranquillity, is restrained though not destroyed."

"I went into Southwark, to Mr. Baxter. I was to wait upon him once before, and then he was busy. I found him in pretty comfortable circumstances, though a prisoner, in a private house near the prison, attended on by his own man and maid. My good friend, Mr. S[amuel] L[awrence], went with me. He is in as good health as one can expect; and, methinks, looks better, and speaks heartier, than when I saw him last. The token you sent, he would by no means be persuaded to accept, and was almost angry when I pressed it, from one suited as well as himself. He said he did not use to receive; and I understand since, his need is not great.

"We sat with him about an hour. I was very glad to find that he so much approved of my present circumstances. He said he knew not wh young men might not improve as well, as by travelling abroad. He inquired for his Shropshire friends, and observed, that of those gentlemen who were with him at

Wem, he hears of none whose sons tread in their fathers' steps but Colonel Hunt's. He inquired about Mr. Macworth's, and Mr. Lloyd's (of Aston) children. He gave us some good counsel to prepare for trials; and said the best preparation for them was, a life of faith, and a constant course of self-denial. He thought it harder constantly to deny temptations to sensual lusts and pleasures, than to resist one single temptation to deny Christ for fear of suffering: the former requiring such constant watchfulness; however, after the former, the latter will be the easier. He said, we who are young are apt to count upon great things, but we must not look for them; and much more to this purpose. He said he thought dying by sickness usually much more painful and dreadful, than dying a violent death; especially considering the extraordinary supports which those have who suffer for righteousness' sake."[a]

When it was seen that Baxter would neither pay the fine, nor petition for his release, a private offer appears to have been made through Lord Powis, that the king would grant it as matter of favour.[b] A person of the name of Williams, at the end of 1686, offered to assist him, through that nobleman, in procuring his liberty. Baxter appears to have had some suspicion, either of the man, or of his design; whose object at last appeared to be to get money, as he afterwards made a demand of 38*l.* for his trouble. Baxter resisted this demand, and applied to Lord Powis to know what influence he had in procuring his release. His lordship declared solemnly, as in the presence of God, he had had no influence whatever, and deserved no reward.[c] Lord Powis, however, appears to have been the person who managed this affair, and obtained Baxter's deliverance from prison, though not his release from the bond of his good behaviour. It is probable that Baxter owed the favour he experienced to the change in the disposition of the court towards the dissenters generally at this time, owing to the difficulties experienced from the opposition to Popery on the part of the church, and the hope that by courting the dissenters, their fears might be quieted, and the object more easily secured.

[a] For this letter I am indebted to the 'Memoirs of the Rev. Matthew Henry,' p. 22, by my respected friend Mr. Williams, of Shrewsbury. Both in this, and in his enlarged 'Life of Philip Henry,' he has conferred great obligations on all the lovers of truly Christian and evangelical biography. Both works are replete with matter calculated to produce the most salutary influence on all classes of our religious community.

[b] Penitent Confession, p. 40.

[c] Baxter's MSS.

On the 24th of November, 1686, Sir Samuel Astrey sent his warrant to the keeper of the King's Bench prison, to discharge him. He gave sureties, however, for his good behaviour, his majesty declaring for his satisfaction, that it should not be interpreted a breach of good behaviour for him to reside in London, which was not consistent with the Oxford act. After this release, he continued to live some time within the rules of the Bench; till, on the 28th of February, 1687, he removed to his house in the Charter-house-yard; and again, as far as his health would permit, assisted Mr. Sylvester in his public labours.[d]

[d] Calamy, vol. i. p. 375.

CHAPTER XIII.

1687—1691.

Baxter's Review of his own Life and Opinions, and Account of his matured Sentiments and Feelings—Remarks on that Review—The Public Events of his last Years—The Revolution—The Act of Toleration—Baxter's sense of the Articles required to be subscribed by this Act—Agreement of the Presbyterian and Independent Ministers of London—Last Years of Baxter—Preaches for Sylvester—His Writings—Visited by Dr. Calamy—Account of his last Sickness and Death, by Bates and Sylvester—Calumnious Report respecting the State of his Mind—Vindicated by Sylvester—Buried in Christ-church—His Will—William Baxter—Funeral Sermons by Sylvester and Bates—Sketch of his Character by the latter—Concluding Observations on the Characteristic Piety of Baxter.

HAVING brought down the narrative of this venerable man's life and times nearly to the close of his active career, I apprehend this is the proper place to introduce his own review of the progress of his mind and character. He who was so attentive to others, and who drew the character of many, was not indifferent about himself, and exercised a much more rigid scrutiny into his own principles and conduct than he ever employed on those of his fellow men. He strongly recommended self-examination and self-judgment; it will now appear how conscientiously he practised them. The virtue of candour he ever enforced, with all the energy and eloquence of which he was master; and in the development, which he furnishes of the state of his own mind, and of his most secret thoughts, he shows how he was trained to practise it.

In his case, we have an advantage which is not frequently enjoyed in writing the lives of distinguished individuals. We are furnished with his own views at length, not merely of his life and labours, but of the gradual and successive changes of his mind. Had this been the production of a weak, self-con-

ceited man, or of one little accustomed to trace the workings of his intellectual and moral principles, it would have been worth very little; but being the work of a man of deep piety, unfeigned humility, and of the most discriminating powers of mind; of one who studied himself, as well as others, with the profoundest attention, and who was more ready to disclose his own failures and imperfections, than to speak of his own virtues, it is exceedingly valuable. As he has left it with the express view of enabling posterity to form a correct idea of himself; of a man who was warmly applauded by one party, and not less maligned by another, it would be altogether wrong to withhold it, or to give it in any other words than his own. It was written towards the latter part of his life, and comprises an extensive review of his experience, opinions, and writings. I omit only what I conceive to be extraneous or now unnecessary, and reserve his opinion of his writings, with a few other passages, for the second part of this work. If the reader make a little allowance for a slight appearance of egotism and garrulity, he will probably find this among the most instructive parts of the life of Baxter. It is the summary of his matured views, after a long and busy career, in which he had seen much both of the world and of the church.

"Because it is soul experience which those who urge me to this kind of writing expect, that I should, especially, communicate to others; and I have said little of God's dealings with my soul since the time of my younger years, I shall only give the reader so much satisfaction as to acquaint him truly what change God hath made upon my mind and heart since those unriper times, and wherein I now differ in judgment and disposition from myself. For any more particular account of heart occurrences, and God's operations on me, I think it somewhat unsavoury to recite them, seeing God's dealings are much the same with all his servants in the main, and points wherein he varieth, are usually so small, that I think such not fit to be repeated. Nor have I any thing extraordinary to glory in, which is not common to the rest of my brethren, who have the same spirit, and are servants of the same Lord. The true reasons why I do adventure so far upon the censure of the world as to tell them wherein the case is altered with me, is, that I may take off young inexperienced Christians from over confidence in their first apprehensions, or overvaluing their first degrees of grace, or too much applauding and following unfurnished, inexperi-

enced men; and that they may be directed what mind and course of life to prefer, by the judgment of one that hath tried both before them.

"The temper of my mind hath somewhat altered with the temper of my body. When I was young I was more vigorous, affectionate, and fervent, in preaching, conference, and prayer, than, ordinarily, I can be now. My style was more extemporate and lax, but, by the advantage of warmth, and a very familiar moving voice and utterance, my preaching then did more affect the auditory, than it did many of the last years before I gave over preaching. But what I delivered then was much more raw, and had more passages that would not bear the trial of accurate judgments; and my discourses had both less substance and less judgment than of late.

"My understanding was then quicker, and could more easily manage any thing that was newly presented to it upon a sudden; but it is since better furnished, and acquainted with the ways of truth and error, and with a multitude of particular mistakes of the world, which then I was the more in danger of, because I had only the faculty of knowing them, but did not actually know them. I was then like a man of a quick understanding, that was to travel a way which he never went before, or to cast up an account which he never laboured in before, or to play on an instrument of music which he never saw before. I am now like one of somewhat a slower understanding, who is travelling a way which he hath often gone, and is casting up an account which he hath ready at hand, and that is playing on an instrument which he hath frequently used: so that I can very confidently say my judgment is much sounder and firmer now than it was then: for though I am now as competent a judge of the actings of my own understanding as then, I can judge better of the effects. When I peruse the writings which I wrote in my younger years, I can find the footsteps of my unfurnished mind, and of my emptiness and insufficiency: so that the man that followed my judgment then, was likelier to have been misled by me than he that should follow it now.

"In my younger years, my trouble for sin was most about my actual failings; but now I am much more troubled for inward defects and omissions, for want of the vital duties or graces of the soul. My daily trouble is so much for my ignorance of God, weakness of belief, want of greater love to God, strangeness to him and to the life to come, and for want of a greater

willingness to die, and more longing to be with God in heaven, that I take not some immoralities, though very great, to be in themselves so great and odious sins, if they could be found separate from these. Had I all the riches of the world, how gladly should I give them for a fuller knowledge, belief, and love, of God and everlasting glory! These wants are the greatest burden of my life, which oft maketh my life itself a burden. I cannot find any hope of reaching so high in these enjoyments, while I am in the flesh, as I once hoped before this time to have attained; which maketh me the wearier of this sinful world, that is honoured with so little of the knowledge of God.

"Heretofore, I placed much of my religion in tenderness of heart, grieving for sin, and penitential tears; and less of it in the love of God, in studying his goodness, and engaging in his joyful praises, than now I do. Then I was little sensible of the greatness and excellency of love and praise, though I coldly spake the same words as now I do. I am less troubled for want of grief and tears (though I value humility, and refuse not needful humiliation), but my conscience now looketh at love and delight in God, and praising him, as the top of all my religious duties; for which it is that I value and use the rest.

"My judgment is much more for frequent and serious meditation on the heavenly blessedness than it was in my younger days. I then thought that a sermon on the attributes of God, and the joys of heaven, was not the most excellent; and was wont to say, 'Every body knoweth that God is great and good, and that heaven is a blessed place; I had rather hear how I may attain it.' Nothing pleased me so well as the doctrine of regeneration and the marks of sincerity, because these things were suitable to me in that state; but now I had rather read, hear, meditate, on God and heaven, than on any other subject. I perceive that it is the object which altereth and elevateth the mind; which will resemble that which it most frequently feedeth on. It is not only useful to our comfort to be much in heaven in believing thoughts; it must animate all our other duties, and fortify us against every temptation and sin. The love of the end is the poise or spring which setteth every wheel a-going, and must put us on to all the means; for a man is no more a Christian indeed than he is heavenly.

"Formerly I knew much less than now, and yet was not half so much acquainted with my ignorance: I had a great delight in the daily, new discoveries which I made, and of the light which

shined in upon me, like a man that cometh into a country where he never was before; but I little knew either how imperfectly I understood those very points whose discovery so much delighted me, or how much might be said against them, or how many things I was yet a stranger to. I now find far greater darkness in all things, and perceive how very little we know in comparison of that of which we are ignorant. I have, therefore, far meaner thoughts of my own understanding, though I must needs know that it is better furnished than it was then.

"I now see more good and more evil than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections; and that nearer approach and fuller trial do make the best appear more weak and faulty than their admirers at a distance think. I find that few are so bad as either malicious enemies or censorious, separating professors do imagine. In some, indeed, I find that human nature is corrupted into a greater likeness to devils than I once thought any on earth had been; but even in the wicked, usually, there is more for grace to make advantage of, and more to testify for God and holiness, than I once believed there had been.

"I less admire gifts of utterance and the bare profession of religion than I once did; and have much more charity for many who by the want of gifts do make an obscurer profession. I once thought that almost all who could pray movingly and fluently, and talk well of religion, had been saints. But experience hath opened to me what odious crimes may consist with high profession; while I have met with divers obscure persons, not noted for any extraordinary profession or forwardness in religion, but only to live a quiet, blameless life, whom I have after found to have long lived, as far as I could discern, a truly godly and sanctified life; only their prayers and duties were, by accident, kept secret from other men's observation. Yet he that upon this pretence would confound the godly and the ungodly, may as well go about to lay heaven and hell together.

"I am not so narrow in my special love as heretofore: being less censorious, and taking more than I did for saints, it must needs follow that I love more as saints than I did formerly. I think it not lawful to put that man off with bare church communion, and such common love which I must allow the wicked, who professeth himself a true Christian, by such a profession as I cannot disprove. I am not so narrow in my principles of church communion as once I was. I more plainly perceive the

difference between the church as congregate, or visible, and as regenerate, or mystical. I can now distinguish between sincerity and profession; that a credible profession is proof sufficient of a man's title to church admission; and that the profession is credible *in foro ecclesiæ*, which is not disproved. I am not for narrowing the church more than Christ himself alloweth us; nor for robbing him of any of his flock. I am more sensible how much it is the will of Christ, that every man be the chooser or refuser of his own felicity, and that it lieth most on his own hands whether he will have communion with the church or not, and that if he be an hypocrite, it is himself that will bear the loss.

"Yet I am more apprehensive than ever of the great use and need of ecclesiastical discipline; what a sin it is in the pastors of the church to make no distinction, but by bare names and sacraments, and to force all the unmeet, against their wills, to church communion: though the ignorant and erroneous may sometimes be forced to hear instruction. What a great dishonour to Christ it is, when the church is as vicious as Pagan and Mahometan assemblies, and differs from them only in ceremony and name!

"I am much more sensible how prone many young professors are to spiritual pride, and self-conceitedness, and unruliness, and division, and so to prove the grief of their teachers, and firebrands in the church; and how much of a minister's work lieth in preventing this, and humbling and confirming such young inexperienced professors, and keeping them in order in their progress in religion. Yet I am more sensible of the sin and mischief of using men cruelly in matters of religion, and of pretending men's good and the order of the church, for acts of inhumanity or uncharitableness. Such know not their own infirmity, nor yet the nature of pastoral government, which ought to be paternal and by love; nor do they know the way to win a soul, or to maintain the church's peace.

"My soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of this miserable world, and more drawn out in desire of its conversion, than heretofore. I was wont to look but little further than England in my prayers, not considering the state of the rest of the world; or if I prayed for the conversion of the Jews, that was almost all. But now, as I better understand the case of the world, and the method of the Lord's prayer; there is nothing in the world that lieth so heavy upon my heart, as the thought

of the miserable nations of the earth. It is the most astonishing part of all God's providence to me, that he so far forsaketh almost all the world, and confineth his special favour to so few; that so small a part of the world hath the profession of Christianity, in comparison of heathens, Mahometans, and other infidels; that among professed Christians there are so few that are saved from gross delusions, and have any competent knowledge; and that among those there are so few that are seriously religious, and who truly set their hearts on heaven. I cannot be affected so much with the calamities of my own relations or the land of my nativity, as with the case of the heathen, Mahometan, and ignorant nations of the earth. No part of my prayers are so deeply serious as that for the conversion of the infidel and ungodly world, that God's name may be sanctified, and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Nor was I ever before so sensible what a plague the division of languages is, which hindereth our speaking to them for their conversion. Nor what a great sin tyranny is, which keepeth out the Gospel from most of the nations of the world. Could we but go among Tartars, Turks, and heathens, and speak their language, I should be but little troubled for the silencing of eighteen hundred ministers at once, in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out here, and in Scotland, and Ireland; there being no employment in the world so desirable in my eyes as to labour for the winning of such miserable souls; which maketh me greatly honour Mr. John Elliot, the apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have laboured in such work.

"I am more deeply afflicted for the disagreements of Christians than I was when I was a younger Christian. Except the case of the infidel world, nothing is so bad and grievous to my thoughts as the case of divided churches: and therefore I am more deeply sensible of the sinfulness of those prelates and pastors of churches who are the principal cause of these divisions. Oh! how many millions of souls are kept by them in ignorance and ungodliness, and deluded by faction, as if it were true religion! How is the conversion of infidels hindered by them, and Christ and religion heinously dishonoured! The contentions between the Greek church and the Roman, the Papists and the Protestants, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, have wofully hindered the kingdom of Christ.

"I am farther than ever I was from expecting great matters of unity, splendour, or prosperity, to the church on earth, or

that saints should dream of a kingdom of this world, or flatter themselves with the hope of a golden age, or of reigning over the ungodly, till there be a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. On the contrary, I am more apprehensive that suffering must be the church's most ordinary lot; and true Christians must be self-denying cross-bearers, even where there are none but formal, nominal Christians to be the cross-makers: for though, ordinarily, God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, that the church may grow externally in the summer of prosperity, and intensively and radically in the winter of adversity; yet, usually, their night is longer than their day, and that day itself hath its storms and tempests.

"I do not lay so great a stress upon the external modes and forms of worship, as many young professors do. I have suspected myself, as perhaps the reader may do, that this is from a cooling and declining of my former zeal, though the truth is, I never much complied with men of that mind; but I find that judgment and charity are the causes of it, as far as I am able to discover. I cannot be so narrow in my principles of church communion as many are, that are so much for a liturgy, or so much against it; so much for ceremonies, or so much against them, that they can hold communion with no church that is not of their mind and way.

"If I were among the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Independents, yea, the Anabaptists, owning no heresy, nor setting themselves against charity and peace, I would sometimes hold occasional communion with them as Christians; if they would give me leave, without forcing me to any sinful subscription or action, though my most usual communion should be with that society which I thought most agreeable to the word of God if I were free to choose. I cannot be of their opinion, that think God will not accept him that prayeth by the Common Prayer-book; and that such forms are a self-invented worship, which God rejecteth; nor yet can I be of their mind that say the like of extempore prayers.

"I am much less regardful of the approbation of man, and set much lighter by contempt or applause, than I did long ago. I am oft suspicious that this is not only from the increase of self-denial and humility, but partly from my being glutted and surfeited with human applause. All worldly things appear most vain and unsatisfactory when we have tried them most: but

though I feel that this hath some hand in the effect, yet, as far as I can perceive, the knowledge of man's nothingness, and God's transcendent greatness, with whom it is that I have most to do, and the sense of the brevity of human things, and the nearness of eternity, are the principal causes of this effect; which some have imputed to self-conceitedness and moroseness.

"I am more and more pleased with a solitary life, and though in a way of self-denial, I could submit to the most public life for the service of God, when he requireth it, and would not be unprofitable, that I might be private, yet I must confess it is much more pleasing to myself to be retired from the world, and to have very little to do with men, and to converse with God and conscience and good books.

"Though I was never much tempted to the sin of covetousness, yet my fear of dying was wont to tell me that I was not sufficiently loosened from the world: but I find that it is comparatively very easy to me to be loose from this world, but hard to live by faith above. To despise earth, is easy to me; but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant with heaven. I have nothing in this world which I could not easily let go; but to get satisfying apprehensions of the other world is the great and grievous difficulty.

"I am much more apprehensive than long ago of the odiousness and danger of the sin of pride. Scarcely any sin appeareth more odious to me, having daily more acquaintance with the lamentable naughtiness and frailty of man, and of the mischiefs of that sin; and especially in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical. I think so far as any man is proud, he is kin to the devil, and utterly a stranger to God and to himself. It is a wonder that it should be a possible sin to men that still carry about with them, in soul and body, such humbling matter to remedy as we all do.

"I am much more sensible than heretofore, of the breadth, and length, and depth, of the radical, universal, odious sin of selfishness, and therefore have written so much against it; and of the excellency and necessity of self-denial, and of a public mind, and of loving our neighbours as ourselves.

"I am more solicitous than I have been about my duty to God, and less solicitous about his dealings with me; being assured that he will do all things well; acknowledging the goodness of all the declarations of his holiness, even in the punishment of man; and knowing that there is no rest but in the will and goodness of God.

"Though my works were never such as could be any temptation to me to dream of obliging God by proper merit in commutative justice, yet one of the most ready, constant, undoubted evidences of my uprightness and interest in his covenant, is, the consciousness of my living devoted to him. I the more easily believe the pardon of my failings through my Redeemer, while I know that I serve no other master, and that I know no other end, or trade, or business, but that I am employed in his work, and make it the object of my life to live to him in the world, notwithstanding my infirmities. This bent and business of my life, with my longing desires after perfection, in the knowledge and love of God, and in a holy and heavenly mind, are the two standing, constant, discernible evidences which most put me out of doubt of my sincerity. I find that constant action and duty are what keep the first always in sight; and constant wants and weaknesses, and coming short of my desires, do make these desires the more troublesome, and so the more easily still perceived.

"Though my habitual judgment, resolution, and scope of life, be still the same, yet I find a great mutability as to the actual apprehensions and degrees of grace; and consequently find that so mutable a thing as the mind of man, would never keep itself if God were not its keeper. When I have been seriously musing upon the reasons of Christianity, with the concurrent evidences methodically placed in their just advantages before my eyes, I am so clear in my belief of the Christian verities, that Satan hath little room for a temptation; but sometimes when he hath on a sudden set some temptation before me, when the foresaid evidences have been out of the way, or less upon my thoughts, he hath, by such surprises, amazed me, and weakened my faith in the present act. So also as to the love of God, and trusting in him, sometimes when the motives are clearly apprehended, the duty is more easy and delightful; and at other times I am merely passive and dull, if not guilty of actual despondency and distrust.

"Thus much of the alterations of my soul since my younger years, I thought best to give the reader, instead of all those experiences and actual motions and affections, which I suppose him rather to have expected an account of. And having transcribed thus much of a life which God hath read, and conscience hath read, and must further read, I humbly lament it, and beg pardon of it, as sinful, and too unequal and unprofitable. I warn

the reader to amend that in his own, which he findeth to have been amiss in mine; confessing, also, that much hath been amiss which I have not here particularly mentioned, and that I have not lived according to the abundant mercies of the Lord. But what I have recorded hath been especially to perform my vows, and declare his praise to all generations, who hath filled up my days with his invaluable favours, and bound me to bless his name for ever. I have done it also to prevent the defective performance of this task by some overvaluing brethren, who I know intended it, and were unfitter to do it than myself; and for such reasons as Junius, Scultetus, Thuanus, and many others, have done the like before me. The principal of which are these three: 1. As travellers and seamen use to do after great adventures and deliverances, I hereby satisfy my conscience, in praising the blessed Author of all those undeserved mercies which have filled up my life. 2. Foreseeing, by the attempts of Bishop Morley, what Prelatists and Papists are likely to say of me, when they have none to contradict them, and how possible it is that those who never knew me may believe them, though thay have lost their hopes with all the rest, I take it to be my duty to be so faithful to that stock of reputation which God hath entrusted me with, as to defend it at the rate of opening the truth. Such as have made the world believe that Luther consulted with the devil, that Calvin was a stigmatised sodomite, that Beza turned Papist, &c., to blast their labours, I know are very likely to say any thing respecting me, which their interest or malice tell them will any way advantage their cause, to make my writings unprofitable when I am dead. 3. That young Christians may be warned by the mistakes and failings of my unriper times, to learn in patience, live in watchfulness, and not be fierce and proudly confident in their first conceptions; to reverence ripe, experienced age, and to beware of taking such for their chief guides, as have nothing but immature and inexperienced judgments, with fervent affections and free and confident expressions; but to learn of them that have with holiness, study, time, and trial, looked about them, as well on one side as on the other, and attained to clearness and impartiality in their judgments.

"Having mentioned the changes which I think were for the better, I must add, that as I confessed many of my sins before, so I have been guilty of many since which, because materially

they seemed small, have had the less resistance, and yet on the review, do trouble me more than if they had been greater, done in ignorance. It can be no small sin formally, which is committed against knowledge and conscience and deliberation, whatever excuse it have. To have sinned while I preached and wrote against sin, and had such abundant and great obligations from God, and made so many promises against it, doth lay me very low: not so much in fear of hell, as in great displeasure against myself, and such self-abhorrence as would cause revenge upon myself, were it not forbidden. When God forgiveth me, I cannot forgive myself; especially for my rash words or deeds, by which I have seemed injurious and less tender and kind than I should have been to my near and dear relations, whose love abundantly obliged me. When such are dead, though we never differed in point of interest, or any other matter, every sour or cross, provoking word which I gave them, maketh me almost irreconcilable to myself, and tells me how repentance brought some of old to pray to the dead whom they had wronged, to forgive them, in the hurry of their passion.

"That which I named before, by-the-by, is grown one of my great diseases; I have lost much of that zeal which I had to propagate any truths to others, save the mere fundamentals. When I perceive people or ministers to think they know what indeed they do not, which is too common, and to dispute those things which they never thoroughly studied, or expect that I should debate the case with them, as if an hour's talk would serve instead of an acute understanding and seven years' study, I have no zeal to make them of my opinion, but an impatience of continuing discourse with them on such subjects, and am apt to be silent or to turn to something else; which, though there be some reason for it, I feel cometh from a want of zeal for the truth, and from an impatient temper of mind. I am ready to think that people should quickly understand all in a few words; and if they cannot, to despair of them, and leave them to themselves. I know the more that this is sinful in me, because it is partly so in other things, even about the faults of my servants or other inferiors; if three or four times warning do no good to them, I am much tempted to despair of them, turn them away, and leave them to themselves.

"I mention all these distempers that my faults may be a warning to others to take heed, as they call on myself for repentance and watchfulness. O Lord! for the merits, and sacrifice, and

intercession of Christ, be merciful to me, a sinner, and forgive my known and unknown sins!"*

Thus far Baxter's review of his own experience and opinions. —If ever a human being was made transparent by its own simplicity and integrity, we may be justified in saying it was Richard Baxter. In this lengthened and rigid description of himself, he may be regarded as furnishing us with that window in the breast, for which the philosopher so ardently, but vainly, sighed, and by which he has enabled us to see all its movements and hidden springs. Making every allowance for the deceitfulness of the human heart, and that partiality to ourselves, which constitutes one of the leading evils of our nature, no reasonable doubt can be entertained that Baxter has given a very fair and full view of his principles and character. It is evident that his judgment of himself leaned to the severe rather than to the lax side; and that while he properly wished to be acquitted before men of evils and crimes of which he had not been guilty, and the admission of which would have fixed reproach on the Gospel, he was chiefly desirous that no over estimate should be formed of his attainments as a Christian.

His solemn warnings to the young and inexperienced, against being led away by novelties, and by rash, inexperienced teachers, are not to be regarded as the doting of an old man, peevish from his own waning popularity, or from being overshadowed by the splendid attractions of others. He had had much experience among the professors of religion, over many of whom he had been compelled to mourn. His instructions are as applicable now as ever, when so many are injured by want of sobriety of mind, and are ready to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine; when Christianity has come to be regarded as a new discovery, which nobody has understood till lately, and the Bible considered as a book of enigmas, capable of the wildest solutions, and the most fanciful combinations. To follow truth, wherever it may lead, is the duty of all Christians; to have the fortitude to stop where its evidence ceases; not to substitute our own fancies in the place of the revelation of God; to be ready to receive from all, and to refuse submitting to the dictation of any, ought no less to be our study and our aim.

The love of controversy is hateful, the fear of it is pusillani-

* Life, part i. pp. 121—132.

mous. Both ought to be avoided by every rightly constituted mind. No man of his age engaged in it to so great an extent as Baxter, and yet no man spoke more against it. In both he was sincere. He loved not controversy for its own sake; but he was frequently impelled by regard to truth, or that which he considered as truth, to engage in what was most unpleasant to his Christian feelings. He sometimes erred in his judgment in these matters, but never was influenced by unworthy motives, or guilty of disingenuous conduct. He loved peace, and he loved his friends; but he loved truth more.

It is instructive to observe the deep humility of his mind, and the tenderness of his conscience. As he approached the world of glory, and appeared to others to be eminently fitted for its enjoyments, the contemplation of its light and splendour only made his own darkness and pollution more apparent to himself. The increasing clearness of his perceptions had not only a direct, but a reflex, operation. If it increased his knowledge of heaven, and inflamed his desire of its blessedness, it also filled him with a deeper consciousness of his own unmeetness for its pure and perfect felicity. He rejoiced, but he also trembled; he exulted in hope, but he also feared as a sinner. While the Divine Character attracted him by its infinite love and compassion, it awed him by the majesty of its holiness, and its peerless glory.

The importance which he attached to the enjoyment of God as the main spring and principle of genuine religion, and the degree in which he appears to have experienced it, are delightful proofs of the ripeness of his own soul for that blessedness for which he so earnestly panted. The expansion of his love to God, increased his love to men; led him to bear with their infirmities, to mourn over their evils, and to pity their miseries. As he approached nearer to heaven, he seemed to breathe more of its spirit, and to carry its very atmosphere, an atmosphere of holy love, about him. He felt he had little more to do on earth, than to pray for its guilty inhabitants, and supplicate God to establish his own kingdom. Thus did he continue to bless that world in which he had experienced so much ingratitude and affliction, and prepare for the mansions of his Father's house, in which he is now occupying a distinguished place.

The public transactions of the nation, during the last years of Baxter's life, were of the highest interest, but it does not

appear, from any thing I can discover, that he took much part in them. During the whole of the reign of James, with occasional intermissions, the dissenters continued to be oppressed and persecuted. The declaration for general liberty of conscience, which was issued by the king, in April 1687, was not intended to benefit them, but to promote the interests of Popery. Still it was a mercy to conscientious men, to enjoy an interval of repose from suffering. The dissenters accepted the boon, though they hated the principle on which it was conferred. Addresses to the court were expected from them, and some were accordingly presented; but in these Baxter, and several of his brethren, refused to join; though he availed himself of the privilege, which was justly, though unconstitutionally bestowed.[f]

What his views were of the Revolution, I am unable to state. No man would more heartily rejoice in the deliverance of his country, and the overthrow of Popery, than Baxter: though it is not improbable that his conscientiousness, and his peculiar principles on the subject of legitimate monarchy, might cause some doubt in his mind respecting the right of William and Mary to the throne of England. This, however, is merely conjecture. The dissenting ministers of London, to the number of ninety, soon after the arrival of the Prince of Orange in London, waited on him, to congratulate him on his success, and to assure him of their hearty concurrence in his enterprise. I suppose Baxter was not of the number, his age and infirmities rendering him unequal to such a service, though he had fully approved of it.

In that ever-memorable event, no class of persons had greater reason to rejoice than the Protestant dissenters. On the part of William, there was the disposition as well as the interest to protect and encourage them. A thorough Protestant himself, and bred in a country of religious freedom, he was the natural friend of all true Protestants, while he was superior to those narrow prejudices which an exclusive system is apt to create and to foster. Had his own views and wishes been realised, he would have put an end to the most invidious of the distinctions between churchmen and dissenters, and would not have left it to the present parliament of George IV., to perform an act of tardy justice to a large body of men who have always deserved well of their country.

All the efforts of William, and of the few enlightened men by

[f] Calamy, vol. i. p. 377.

whom he was surrounded, failed to induce the houses of parliament to repeal the Test act, or to adopt measures for comprehending the Nonconformists within the pale of the established church. An act of toleration, however, was passed, by which the dissenters, on taking the oaths to government, and subscribing thirty-five and a half of the thirty-nine articles, should be placed under the full protection of the law. This, though an imperfect measure, was an unspeakable blessing to men who had long been oppressed and persecuted for righteousness' sake. It was the last public measure, also, in regard to which Baxter appears to have taken some active part. To relieve his own mind, and to assist his brethren in coming to such conclusions as might at once satisfy their consciences, and enable them to avail themselves of the benefit of this act, he drew up a paper containing his sense of the articles which he was called to subscribe. The substance of this paper deserves to be communicated, as it shows what were the sentiments of Baxter on some important points, towards the close of his life, the construction which he put on some doubtful expressions in the articles, and the principle on which he thought it lawful to subscribe according to the act of parliament, that he might enjoy the benefit of a tolerated ministry.

The last clause of the second article, originally contained an expression in Latin, which, though left out in the English, led Baxter to demur about the sense. It stated that Christ died to be a sacrifice for all (*omnibus*) the actual sins of men. This, he supposed, was not meant to include final impenitence, but all sorts of sin which had been forsaken. Christ's descent into hell, in the third article, he explained of the state of separate souls. That Christ, on his resurrection, "took again his body with flesh and bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, and therewith ascended into heaven," he understood as signifying that Christ sitteth in heaven with the same body, glorified, rendered spiritual, and incorruptible, which on earth had consisted of flesh and bones. In the strict interpretation of the article, the words would be contradictory to 1 Cor. xv. 50, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" it would also give us a degrading idea of his body, as inferior to what his people will possess, who are to rise incorruptible and immortal. He agreed to the sixth article, as "containing all things necessary to salvation, if the ministry, sacraments, and

church communion, came under this description: and if, under the title of "canonical books," were included the Epistles to the Hebrews, the 2d of Peter, and the 2d and 3d of John, Jude, and the Revelation. He entered his protest against the clause in the seventh article, "That the civil precepts of the law given from God by Moses, ought not of necessity to be received in any commonwealth," unless it referred only to the particular civil laws peculiar to the Jewish commonwealth, and not to those moral laws included in the Mosaic dispensation; which are of universal obligation, and common to all Christian nations. He assented to the eighth article on the three creeds, provided he was not understood to admit two Gods, by subscribing the clause in the Nicene creed, "God of God, very God of very God;" or to assent to the damnatory clause of the Athanasian creed. He explained the infection of nature remaining even in the regenerate, according to the ninth article, to be so, not in predominant force or unpardoned, but in a modified and subdued degree. The language of the tenth article, that "we have no power to do good works," he softened into an acknowledgment that "our natural powers or faculties are not sufficient without grace." That the eleventh article might not be construed as giving countenance to a disregard of righteousness of life, he enters at large into it. He was anxious to be understood as expressing, by the twelfth article, that "good works do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith," an hypothetical necessity, consistent with freedom; and he expounded the last clause, "that by them," *i. e.* good works, "a lively faith may be as evidently expressed, as a tree discerned by the fruit," to mean a truth of evidence, not an equal degree. His explanation of the thirteenth article, "Of works before justification," seems to set it aside, by asserting the existence of common grace, preparatory to special grace; and to contradict it, by referring to the texts, which declare, that "to him that hath by improvement shall be given, and, in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him;" and by observing, that believing in the being of God, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, is, "better than nothing, and than mere sin." He supposed that the phrase, "voluntary works," in the fourteenth article, or work of supererogation, was not designed to stigmatise, as arrogant and impious, voluntary canons, impositions, oaths, and church offices.

The sixteenth article, "Of sin after baptism," he supposes to refer only to the unpardoned sin against the Holy Ghost, and a total departure from common grace, and some degree of habit and act of some special grace; but that it does not determine the controversy concerning a total and final falling away from such an unconfirmed grace as would otherwise save.

On the eighteenth article, "Of obtaining eternal salvation only by the name of Christ," he observes, that God judgeth men by no other law than that which they were under: that the Jewish peculiarity did not repeal the gracious law made to fallen mankind in Adam and Noah: that God had more people of old than the Jews and proselytes. On these principles he conceives that the article could not mean to denounce a curse on all who thought that the spirit and grace of Christ extended beyond the knowledge of his name, and who hoped that some who never heard it would be saved. If it were intended to apply to such, he declares that he would not curse them; adding, all were not accursed who hoped well of Socrates, Antoninus, Severus, Cicero, Epictetus, Plutarch, and such characters. He appeals to the case of the Jews of old, as having more imperfect notions of the character of Christ, than the apostles before his resurrection; and to the erroneous sentiments of even the apostles themselves before that event, who did not, till afterwards, believe in the death of Christ for our sins, in his rising again, in his ascension and intercession. "Though faith," he considered, "in these facts not to be essential to Christianity," he declares, "If I durst curse all the world, who now believe no more than the ancient Jews and the apostles then did, yet I durst not curse all Christians that hope better of them. The twenty-third article, "of ministering in the congregation," he interprets so as to make it comprehensive of the holy orders of the Nonconformist. The article itself describes and judges those to be lawfully called to preach and administer the sacraments, "who are chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." He declares he understood public authority to mean "authority given by Christ in his Scripture institution, and by those whom Christ authorises under him." This was a latitude of interpretation beyond the intention of the compilers, who certainly had in view the exclusive authority of bishops. On the twenty-fifth article, of "The Sacraments," in which they are represented, "not as badges and

tokens only of the Christian profession," he explains himself as holding them to be "certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and of God's goodwill:" that they signify what God offers, invest the true believing receiver in the right of pardon, adoption, and salvation; and are morally operative." On the twenty-sixth article, "Of the unworthiness of ministers, which hinders not the effect of sacraments," he says, "That though the ignorance and wickedness of the minister do not make void the sacraments, yet the prayers, preaching, and example of able and godly men, are usually more effectual, since 'God heareth not sinners,' as the blind man argued: 'but if any be a worshipper of him, and doth his will, him he heareth;' and to the wicked God saith, 'What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy mouth?'" He observes also, on this article, "That to prefer a bad man before a better, was sin; and that it was dangerous to encourage in daily sin those, who, though destitute of the essential qualifications, usurped the sacred office of bishops or pastors."

Baxter concludes his sense of the subscribed articles, by saying, "If I have hit on the true meaning, I subscribe my assent; and I thank God that this national church hath doctrine so sound. I pity those who write, preach, or practise, contrary to the articles which they subscribe; and that accuse those who refuse to subscribe them, take those for sinners who take not them for pastors, alleging that their wickedness nulleth not their sacramental administrations." [g]

When he subscribed, he produced this explanation of the thirty-five articles and a half, that his views in doing so might not be misunderstood. Eighty of the dissenting ministers in London concurred with him in his explanations and objections; and thus satisfied themselves that they had done what was right. It was probably the best thing which the government could do at the time, so that the dissenters were glad to accept of it. But such a subscription was found to be a poor protection, either to church or state, and has long since been entirely done away. Baxter's objections to many of the clauses in the subscribed articles, discover both his conscientiousness, and, on some points, the peculiarity of his sentiments. The number who united with him in this paper, shows the extent to which his views were then held among the dissenters, as well as the great influence which he had among his brethren.

[g] Calamy's 'Abridgment,' vol. i. pp. 469—476.

The affair of the agreement of the London Presbyterian and Independent ministers, must have interested Baxter much, though he does not appear to have taken any active part in it. Union was an object always so dear to his heart, that every scheme for promoting it would meet with his cordial concurrence, as long as he was capable of thinking or speaking. The articles were published in 1692, but they had all been agreed to before Baxter's death. Howe was the leading manager of the agreement, the object of which was rather to discountenance useless contentions about matters of ecclesiastical discipline among the dissenters, than to form a corporate body, or to convey the idea of entire agreement on doctrinal points. The style of these articles shows, I think, that Baxter's judgment and feelings had been consulted.[h] From the date of this agreement, Presbyterianism may be said to have existed but in name in England.

If we have followed Baxter through a long life of painful trials, and contention for peace and liberty, it is delightful that its closing scenes should be tranquil and cheering. He lived not only till the dawn of a brighter day, but after it had considerably advanced. The church, it is true, had not comprehended the Nonconformists, or relaxed the rigidity of her terms. On the contrary, after she had completely secured her own chartered rights and privileges, and had little to fear from the common enemy, she began to look on the dissenters with more sternness and severity than before the Revolution. But though she had the power and the disposition to frown and to threaten, the ability to injure was lost. The security and repose of the government, required that all parties should be protected; Baxter and his brethren, therefore, were left to pursue their labours, whether of the pulpit or the press, without molestation. No longer hunted by spies and informers, traduced by malicious and interested enemies, dragged before packed juries and unprincipled judges, to be condemned to ruinous fines, or still more injurious imprisonments and confiscation, they were enabled, with comfort and joy, to "make full proof of their ministry." If they no longer worshipped in splendid and consecrated edifices, or enjoyed the emoluments of the state as the rewards of their ministry, in their quiet, sequestered meetings, sustained by the voluntary benevolence of their flocks, they were honoured to turn

[h] Calamy's 'Abridgment,' vol. i. pp. 476—483.

many sinners to righteousness, and to fit many a saint for the inheritance above. In this delightful work were the few remaining years of Baxter chiefly employed.

From the time of his release from imprisonment, he lived in Charter-house Square, near the meeting-house then occupied by his friend Sylvester. He preached gratuitously for him on the Lord's-day mornings, and every alternate Thursday morning, as long as his strength permitted.

"When he had continued about four years and a half with me," says Sylvester, "he was then disabled from going forth any more to his ministerial work; so that what he did all the residue of his life was in his own hired house, where he opened his doors morning and evening, every day, to all that would come to join in family worship with him; to whom he read the holy Scriptures, from whence 'he preached the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him,' even as one greater than himself had done before him. But at last, his growing distempers and infirmities took him off from this also, confining him first to his chamber and then to his bed. There, though pain and sickness wasted his body, his soul abode rational, strong in faith and hope; arguing itself into, and preserving itself in, patience and joy, through grace; which gave him great support, and kept out doubts and fears concerning his eternal welfare."[1]

The latter years of his life, though full of bodily suffering and sorrow, and less occupied with the public service of God, were not years of idleness. Between the year 1682 and his death, he wrote many, and some of the most useful, of his works. Without giving a minute detail of single sermons and tracts, it is enough to mention, that, during this period, he wrote his 'True History of Councils, enlarged and defended;' his 'Treatises on the Immortality of the Soul, and the Nature of Spirits;' his 'Compassionate Counsel to Young Men,' and his 'Family Catechism;' his 'Dying Thoughts;' his 'Dangerous Schismatic detected;' his 'Catholic Communion defended;' his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament;' his 'English Nonconformity;' his Treatises on 'Knowledge and Love Compared, and Cain and Abel Malignity;' several pieces on the Antinomian and Millenarian Controversies, &c. &c. The very last productions of his pen

[1] Sylvester's 'Funeral Sermon,' p. 16.

show, that, if his eyes had waxed dim, and his natural force had abated, the vigour and ardour of his mind had scarcely, if at all, been impaired.

Dr. Calamy, who visited him during the last year of his life, tells us, "He talked in the pulpit with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of an express from thence, to make a report concerning it. He delivered himself in public as well as in private, with great vivacity and freedom, and his thoughts had a peculiar edge."[j]

Dr. Bates has furnished the most minute and most interesting account of the last trying scene of Baxter's pilgrimage. His funeral sermon for him is one of the best specimens of the preaching of that truly excellent man. He had closely studied the character of his friend, to whom he appears to have been most tenderly attached, and on whom he has pronounced an eulogium, not more deserved by his character, than it is beautiful in itself. At present, I shall restrict myself entirely to his account of Baxter's sickness and death.

"He continued to preach so long, notwithstanding his wasted, languishing body, that the last time he almost died in the pulpit. It would doubtless have been his joy to have been transfigured in the mount. Not long after, he felt the approaches of death, and was confined to his sick bed. Death reveals the secrets of the heart; then words are spoken with most feeling and least affectation. This excellent saint was the same in his life and death; his last hours were spent in preparing others and himself to appear before God. He said to his friends that visited him, 'You come hither to learn to die; I am not the only person that must go this way. I can assure you, that your whole life, be it ever so long, is little enough to prepare for death. Have a care of this vain, deceitful world, and the lusts of the flesh; be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God's glory for your end, his word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet with comfort.

"Never was penitent sinner more humble, never was a sincere believer more calm and comfortable. He acknowledged himself to be the vilest dunghill worm ('twas his usual expression) that ever went to heaven. He admired the divine condescension to us, often saying, 'Lord, what is man; what am I, vile worm, to the great God!' Many times he prayed, God be merciful to me a sinner, and blessed God that this was left upon record in

j Calamy's own Life, vol. i. pp. 220, 221.

the Gospel as an effectual prayer. He said, God may justly condemn me for the best duty I ever did; all my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ, which he often prayed for.

"After a slumber, he waked, and said, 'I shall rest from my labour.' A minister then present, said, 'And your works will follow you.' To whom he replied, 'No works; I will leave out works, if God will grant me the other.' When a friend was comforting him with the remembrance of the good many had received by his preaching and writings, he said, 'I was but a pen in God's hands, and what praise is due to a pen?'

"His resigned submission to the will of God in his sharp sickness was eminent. When extremity of pain constrained him earnestly to pray to God for his release by death, he would check himself: 'It is not fit for me to prescribe—when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt.'

"Being in great anguish, he said, 'O! how unsearchable are his ways, and his paths past finding out; the reaches of his providence we cannot fathom!' And to his friends, 'Do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer.'

"Being often asked by his friends, how it was with his inward man, he replied, 'I bless God I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within.' But it was his trouble he could not triumphantly express it, by reason of his extreme pains. He said, 'Flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing of it; and that though his judgment submitted, yet sense would still make him groan.'

"Being asked by a person of quality, whether he had not great joy from his believing apprehensions of the invisible state, he replied, 'What else, think you, Christianity serves for?' He said, the consideration of the Deity in his glory and greatness, was too high for our thought; but the consideration of the Son of God in our nature, and of the saints in heaven, whom he knew and loved, did much sweeten and familiarise heaven to him. The description of it, in Heb. xii. 22, was most comfortable to him; 'that he was going to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' That scripture, he said, deserved a thousand thousand

thoughts. Oh! how comfortable is that promise; 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath laid up for those who love him.' At another time, he said, that he found great comfort and sweetness in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, and was sorry some good people were prejudiced against the use of it, for there were all necessary petitions for soul and body contained in it. At other times, he gave excellent counsel to young ministers that visited him; earnestly prayed to God to bless their labours, and make them very successful in converting many souls to Christ; expressed great joy in the hopes that God would do a great deal of good by them; and that they were of moderate, peaceful spirits.

"He often prayed that God would be merciful to this miserable, distracted world, and that he would preserve his church and interest in it. He advised his friends to beware of self-conceit, as a sin that was likely to ruin this nation; and said, 'I have written a book against it, which I am afraid has done little good.' Being asked, whether he had altered his mind in controversial points, he said, Those that please, may know my mind in my writings; and that what he had done, was not for his own reputation, but for the glory of God.

"I went to him, with a very worthy friend, Mr. Mather, of New England, the day before he died; and speaking some comforting words to him, he replied, 'I have pain; there is no arguing against sense, but I have peace, I have peace.' I told him, You are now approaching to your long-desired home; he answered, 'I believe, I believe.' He said to Mr. Mather, 'I bless God that you have accomplished your business; the Lord prolong your life.' He expressed great willingness to die; and during his sickness, when the question was asked, 'How he did?' his reply was, '*Almost well.*' His joy was most remarkable, when, in his own apprehensions, death was nearest; and his spiritual joy was at length consummated in eternal joy."[k]

"On Monday," says Sylvester, "about five in the evening, death sent his harbinger to summon him away. A great trembling and coldness extorted strong cries from him, for pity and redress from Heaven; which cries and agonies continued for some time, till at length he ceased, and lay in patient expectation of his change.[l] Being once asked, by his faithful friend, and

[k] Bates' Works, pp. 820, 821.

[l] The bodily sufferings of Baxter must have been intensely great in the

constant attendant in his weakness, Mrs. Bushel, his housekeeper, whether he knew her or not, requesting some sign of it if he did; he softly cried, 'Death, death!' He now felt the benefit of his former preparations for the trying time. The last words that he spake to me, on being informed I was come to see him, were, 'Oh I thank him, I thank him,' and turning his eye to me, he said, 'The Lord teach you how to die.' [m]

"As to himself, even to the last, I never could perceive his peace and heavenly hopes assaulted or disturbed. I have often heard him greatly lament, that he felt no greater liveliness in what appeared so great and clear to him, and so very much desired by him. As to the influence thereof upon his spirit, in order to the sensible refreshments of it, he clearly saw what ground he had to rejoice in God; he doubted not of his right to heaven. He told me, he knew it should be well with him when he was gone. He wondered to hear others speak of their sensible, and passionately strong desires to die, and of their transports of spirit, when sensible of their approaching death; when, though he thought he knew as much as they, and had as rational satisfaction as they could have that his soul was safe, he could never feel their sensible consolations. I asked him, whether much of this was not to be resolved into bodily constitution, he told me that he thought it might be so.

"He expired, on Tuesday morning, about four o'clock, December 8, 1691. Though he expected and desired his dissolution to have been on the Lord's-day before, which, with joy to me, he called a *high day*, because of his desired change then expected by him." [n]

A wicked and groundless report appears to have been circulated shortly after his death, that his mind had been greatly troubled with sceptical doubts before he died. It was brought to Sylvester on such authority that he found it necessary to give it a formal refutation. After quoting a letter from Worcestershire, referring to it, he thus replies to it:

latter part of his life. It appears from his own narrative, that he considered the stone one great cause of the acute pains which he experienced. In part iii. p. 179, is given a long and singular account of himself, in reference to this. At the conclusion, he says, "Whether it be schyrus, or stone, which I doubt not of, I leave them to tell who shall dissect my corpse." He appears to have formed a correct opinion of his own case; for though we have no account of any *post-mortem* examination of his body, a stone extracted from him is still preserved in the British Museum. It is very large, of a bluish colour, and resembling in shape the kidney itself.

[m] Funeral Sermon, p. 16. [n] Preface to Baxter's Life,

"*Audax facinus!*" says Sylvester; "What will degenerate man stick at! We know nothing here that could, in the least, minister to such a report as this. I that was with him all along, have ever heard him triumphing in his heavenly expectation, and ever speaking like one that could never have thought it worth a man's while to be, were it not for the great interest and ends of godliness. He told me that he doubted not, but that it would be best for him when he had left this life and was translated to the heavenly regions.

"He owned what he had written, with reference to the things of God, to the very last. He advised those that came near him carefully to mind their souls' concerns. The shortness of time, the instancy of eternity, the worth of souls, the greatness of God, the riches of the grace of Christ, the excellency and import of an heavenly mind and life, and the great usefulness of the word and means of grace pursuant to eternal purposes, ever lay pressingly upon his own heart, and extorted from him very useful directions and encouragements to all that came near him, even to the last; insomuch that if a polemical or casuistical point, or any speculation in philosophy or divinity, had been but offered to him for his resolution, after the clearest and briefest representation of his mind, which the proposer's satisfaction called for, he presently and most delightfully fell into conversation about what related to our Christian hope and work."[o]

Baxter was buried in Christ-church, where the ashes of his wife and her mother had been deposited. His funeral was attended by a great number of persons of different ranks, especially of ministers, Conformists as well as Nonconformists,[p] who were eager to testify their respect for one of whom it might have been said with equal truth, as of the intrepid reformer of the North, "There lies the man who never feared the face of man."

His last will is dated July 7, 1689. The beginning of it deserves to be quoted.

"I, Richard Baxter, of London, clerk, an unworthy servant of Jesus Christ, drawing to the end of this transitory life, having, through God's great mercy, the free use of my under-

[o] Preface to Baxter's Life.

[p] Dr. Earl informed Mr. Palmer that he was one of the spectators, and that the train of coaches reached from Merchant Taylors' Hall, from whence the corpse was carried, to the place of burial.—*Noncon. Mem.* vol. iii. p. 400.

standing, do make this my last will and testament, revoking all other wills formerly made by me. My spirit I commit, with trust and hope of the heavenly felicity, into the hands of Jesus my glorified Redeemer and Intercessor; and, by his mediation, into the hands of God my reconciled Father, the infinite eternal Spirit, light, life, and love, most great and wise, and good, the God of nature, grace, and glory; of whom and through whom and to whom are all things; my absolute Owner, Ruler, Benefactor, whose I am, and whom I, though imperfectly, serve, seek, and trust; to whom be glory for ever, amen. To him I render most humble thanks, that he hath filled up my life with abundant mercy, and pardoned my sin by the merits of Christ, and vouchsafed by his Spirit to renew me and seal me as his own, and to moderate and bless to me my long sufferings in the flesh, and at last to sweeten them by his own interest and comforting approbation, who taketh the cause of love and concord as his own," &c.

He ordered his books to be distributed among poor scholars.[q] All that remained of his estate, after a few legacies to his kindred, he disposed of for the benefit of the souls and bodies of the poor; and he left Sir Henry Ashurst, Rowland Hunt, of Boraton, esq., Mr. Thomas Hunt, merchant, Edward Harley, Esq., Mr. Thomas Cook, merchant, Mr. Thomas Trench, merchant, and Mr. Robert Bird, gentleman, his executors.[r]

His principal heir was his nephew, William Baxter, a person of considerable attainments as a scholar, and an antiquary. He was born in Shropshire, in 1650. His early education, it would seem, was neglected; which can be accounted for only on the ground that there was something in his situation or disposition that prevented his uncle from affording him that assistance, which he would doubtless have given. From some letters between him and Mrs. Baxter, still preserved, however, it appears that a measure of aid was afforded him. He surmounted the difficulties of his early circumstances, and made very considerable classical attainments. He kept an academy for some years at Tottenham Cross, Middlesex, which he gave up on being chosen master of Mercers'-school, London, where he continued for twenty years, and resigned a short time before his death, which took place in 1723. He published several works,

[q] These were distributed by Mr. Sylvester. Among the Baxter MSS. are receipts addressed to him from various individuals who received them.

[r] Calamy's 'Abridgment,' vol. i. p. 404.

which brought him considerable fame as a scholar; among others—a Critical Edition of Anacreon—and one of Horace—a Dictionary of British Antiquities—and a Glossary of Roman Antiquities. This last was a posthumous publication. It appeared in 1726, with the title of 'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ,' &c. Prefixed to it is a fragment of a Latin life of himself, in which he gives a short character of his uncle; which I have inserted for the amusement of the learned reader, in the note below.*

Funeral sermons were preached for Baxter, by his excellent friend, and companion in labour, Sylvester; and also by Dr. Bates; both of which have been published. The former was preached in Charter-house-yard, to what might be considered in part Baxter's own congregation. It is entitled 'Elisha's Cry after Elisha's God,' and is founded on 2 Kings ii. 14. The latter was preached, by Bates, at Baxter's own desire, at the funeral, though it is not said in what place. The text is Luke xxiii. 46. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The dedication of this discourse to Sir Henry Ashurst, is a piece of beautiful composition, expressive of the respect entertained for that excellent individual, and commemorative of the ardent attachment which subsisted between him andt he deceased minister of Christ. He mentions that, to the work on the Saint's Rest, Sir Henry had been indebted for his first religious impressions. He speaks of the love of Baxter, being "directing, counselling, and exciting," and that of Ashurst, "observant, grateful, and beneficent." It was no small eulogium on such a man that Baxter said, on his death-bed, "he had been the best friend he ever had."

Baxter's person, according to Sylvester, was tall and slender; and in the latter part of his life, stooped very much.

* Biographia Britannica, vol. ii. p. 33. Edit. Kippis. "Hic vir siquis alius erat et in vita celebris et superstite fama decessit. Siquidem ingenio erat acerrimo, doctrina haudquaquam mediocri, extemporanea dicendi facultati incredibili, zelo plano apostolico (quem tamen scurræ nostrorum temporum *cantum* dicunt) morum etiam simplicitate nimis Britannicæ, contemptuque rerum humanarum incognito suo sæculo hic tantus vir ab incunabilis proba educatus in domo, et purissimis institutus exemplis, non ferme provincialium sui temporis sacerdotum inscitiam atque impuros mores (quod vel ipse in schedis reliquit) sponte quadam indolis sua ad *Calvinianos*, puritatis eo tempore damnatos, deflexit, etsi ab Episcopo tunc temporis *Brannogeniensi* in sacerdotem *Anglicanum* locutus. In matrimonio hic habuit *Margaritam* minorem natu filiam inclyti viri probati Charltonii de Castello dicto Appeleio in Coruariis. Verum me instituto hærede, importis decessit."—*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, Pref. Autoris Vita.*

His countenance was composed and grave, somewhat inclining to smile. He had a piercing eye, a very articulate speech, and his deportment was rather plain than complimentary. He had a great command over his thoughts, and had that happy faculty, according to the character which was given of him by a learned man dissenting from him, that "he could say what he would, and he could prove what he said."[t]

"He was a man of clear, deep, fixed, thought; of copious and well-digested reading: of ready, free, and very proper elocution, and aptly expressive of his own thoughts and sentiments. He was most intent upon the weightiest and most useful parts of learning, yet a great lover of all kinds and degrees thereof. He could, in preaching, writing, conference, accommodate himself to all capacities, and answer his obligations to the wise and unwise. He had a moving παθος, and useful acrimony in his words; neither did his expressions want that emphatical accent, which the matter did require. When he spake of weighty soul concerns, you might find his very spirit drenched therein. He was pleasingly conversible, save in his studying hours, wherein he could not bear with trivial disturbances. He was sparingly facetious; but never light or frothy. His heart was warm; his life was blameless, exemplary, and uniform. He was unmoveable where convinced of his duty; yet affable and condescending where there was a likelihood of doing good. His personal abstinence, severities, and labours, were exceeding great. He kept his body under, and always feared pampering his flesh too much. He diligently, and with great pleasure, minded his Master's work within doors, and without, whilst he was able. His charity was very great in proportion to his abilities. His purse was ever open to the poor; where the case required it, he never thought great sums too much. He suited what he gave to the necessities and character of those he gave to: and his charity was not confined to parties or opinions."[u]

As Dr. Bates' sermon comprises some notices of Baxter's life, which have been anticipated and more fully given already, I shall only therefore extract a few passages, in which he describes some of the leading features and qualities of his friend.

"I am sensible," he says, "that in speaking of him I shall be under a double disadvantage: for those who perfectly knew

[t] 'Funeral Sermon,' by Sylvester, pp. 16, 17. [u] Ibid. p. 14.

him will be apt to think my account of him to be short and defective, an imperfect shadow of his resplendent virtues; others, who were unacquainted with his extraordinary worth, will, from ignorance or envy, be inclined to think his just praises to be undue and excessive. Indeed, if love could make me eloquent, I should use all the most lively and graceful colours of language, to adorn his memory: but this consideration relieves me in the consciousness of my disability, that a plain narrative of what Mr. Baxter was and did, will be a most noble eulogy; and that his substantial piety no more needs artificial oratory to set it off, than refined gold wants paint to add lustre and value to it.

"His prayers were an effusion of the most lively, melting expressions, of his intimate, ardent affections to God: from the abundance of the heart, his lips spake. His soul took wing for heaven, and wrapt up the souls of others with him. Never did I see or hear a holy minister address himself to God with more reverence and humility, with respect to his glorious greatness; never with more zeal and fervency, correspondent to the infinite moment of his requests, nor with more filial affiance in the divine mercy.

"In his sermons there was a rare union of arguments and motives, to convince the mind and gain the heart: all the fountains of reason and persuasion were open to his discerning eye. There was no resisting the force of his discourses, without denying reason and divine revelation. He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style; for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words. He despised flashy oratory; but his expressions were clear and powerful, so convincing the understanding, so entering into the soul, so engaging the affections, that those were as deaf as adders, who were not charmed by so wise a charmer. He was animated with the Holy Spirit, and breathed celestial fire, to inspire heat and life into dead sinners, and to melt the obdurate in their frozen tombs.

"He that was so solicitous for the salvation of others, was not negligent of his own; but, as regular love requires, his first care was to prepare himself for heaven. In him, the virtues of the contemplative and active life were eminently united. His time was spent in communion with God, and in charity to men: he lived above the sensible world, and, in solitude and silence, conversed with God. The frequent and serious meditation of eternal things, was the powerful means to make his heart holy

and heavenly, and from thence his conversation. His life was a practical sermon, a drawing example: there was an air of humility and sanctity in his mortified countenance; his deportment was becoming a stranger upon earth and a citizen of heaven. Humility is to other graces as the morning star is to the sun, that goes before it, and follows it in the evening. Humility prepares us for the receiving of grace: 'God gives grace to the humble.' And it follows the exercise of grace: 'Not I,' says the apostle, 'but the grace of God in me.'

"In Mr. Baxter there was a rare union of sublime knowledge, and other spiritual excellencies, with the lowest opinion of himself. He wrote to one, that sent to him a letter full of expressions of honour and esteem, 'You admire one you do not know; knowledge will cure your error. The more we know God, the more reason we see to admire him; but our knowledge of the creature discovers its imperfections, and lessens our esteem.' To the same person, expressing his veneration of him for his excellent gifts and graces, he replied with heat, 'I have the remainder of pride in me; how dare you blow up the sparks of it?' He desired some ministers, his chosen friends, to meet at his house, and spend a day in prayer, for his direction in a matter of moment: before the duty was begun, he said, 'I have desired your assistance at this time, because I believe God will sooner hear your prayers than mine.' He imitated St. Austin both in his penitential confessions and retractions. In conjunction with humility, he had great candour for others. He could willingly bear with persons of differing sentiments; he would not prostitute his own judgment, nor ravish another's. He did not overesteem himself, nor undervalue others. He would give liberal encomiums of many conforming divines. He was severe to himself, but candid in excusing the faults of others; whereas the busy inquirer and censurer of the faults of others, is usually the easy neglecter of his own.

"Self-denial and contempt of the world, were shining graces in him. I never knew any person less indulgent to himself, and more indifferent to his temporal interest. The offer of a bishoprick was no temptation to him; for his exalted soul despised the pleasures and profits which others so earnestly desire; he valued not an empty title upon his tomb.

"His patience was truly Christian. God does often try his children by afflictions to exercise their graces, to occasion their victory, and to entitle them to a triumphant felicity. This

saint was tried by many afflictions. We are very tender of our reputation; his name was obscured under a cloud of detraction. Many slanderous darts were thrown at him; he was charged with schism and sedition. It is true the censures and reproaches of others whom he esteemed and loved, touched him in the tender part; but he, with the great apostle, accounted it a small thing to be judged by men. He was entire to his conscience, and independent on the opinions of others; but his patience was more eminently tried by his continual pains and languishing. Martyrdom is a more easy way of dying, when the combat and the victory are finished at once, than to die by degrees every day. His complaints were frequent, but who ever heard an unsubmissive word drop from his lips? He was not put out of his patience, nor out of the possession of himself. In his sharp pains, he said, 'I have a rational patience, and a believing patience, though sense would recoil.'

"His pacific spirit was a clear character of his being a child of God. How ardently he endeavoured to cement the breaches among us, which others widen and keep open, is publicly known. He said to a friend, 'I can as willingly be a martyr for love, as for any article of the creed.'

"Love to the souls of men was the peculiar character of Mr. Baxter's spirit. In this he imitated and honoured our Saviour, who prayed, died, and lives, for the salvation of souls. All his natural and supernatural endowments were subservient to this blessed end. It was his meat and drink, the life and joy of his life, to do good to souls. His industry was almost incredible in his studies. He had a sensitive nature, as desirous of ease as others, and faint faculties, yet such was the continual application of himself to his great work, as if the labour of one day had supplied strength for another, and the willingness of the spirit had supported the weakness of the flesh." [t]

After this extended view of the character of Baxter, by those who knew him so intimately as Sylvester and Bates, and which is so amply sustained by the history of his life and his numerous writings, little remains to be said by me. They had the advantage of drawing from the life, I can only paint from a copy. This, with the disadvantage of coming after such a master as Bates, and with so difficult a subject as Baxter, is enough to deter me

[t] Bates's Works, pp. 814—820.

from employing my unskilful pencil. Besides, much yet remains to be said of Baxter and his writings, before he can be considered as fully and fairly before the reader. Reserving, therefore, any general view of him which I may be able to give, for the conclusion of the second part, I will at present notice only what I conceive to have been one grand leading feature of his character.

In describing this, I have no better or more appropriate term which I can employ than the word *unearthly;* and even that does not give a full view of all that was absent from, and all that belonged to, his character as a Christian, a minister, and a divine. Among his contemporaries there were men of equal talents, of more amiable dispositions, and of greater learning. But there was no man in whom there appears to have been so little of earth, and so much of heaven; so small a portion of the alloy of humanity, and so large a portion of all that is celestial. He felt scarcely any of the attraction of this world, but felt and manifested the most powerful affinity for the world to come.

The strength and operation of this principle, appeared in all the workings of his mind, and in every part of his personal conduct as a Christian. It was manifested in the intense ardour of his zeal; and the burning fervour of his preaching. It was displayed in his triumph over the weakness and infirmities of his diseased body; in his superiority to the blandishments and charities of life, when they interfered with his work, and in his equal regardlessness of shame and suffering, reward or honour, where the service of Christ and the good of men were concerned.

Influenced by this principle, he threw himself into the army, to check what he considered its wild career. He reproved Cromwell; he expostulated with Charles; and dared the frown of both. The same motive induced him to abstain from marriage, while his work required all his attention. To him a bishoprick had no charms, and a prison no terrors, when he could not enjoy the one with a good conscience, and was doomed to the other for conscience' sake. He stood unappalled before the bar of Jefferies, listening with composure to his ribaldry, and would have gone to the gibbet or the stake without a murmur or complaint.

His very imprudences seem to have arisen from the excess in which, compared with others, this principle existed in him. He seems scarcely to have understood the meaning of the word

prudence; and in so far as it is allied to worldly wisdom, he certainly knew it not. To him, conscience and the law of God, were the rule of duty, not utility, or the hope of success. There was no possibility of influencing him by the promise of reward, or the fear of disappointment. Consequences seldom entered into his calculations. He would not be deterred from preaching a sermon, from writing a book, or making a speech, if duty seemed to require, by all the entreaties of his brethren, or the threatenings of his enemies. The favour and the frown of God he alone regarded, and by their irresistible influence he was carried fearlessly onward to eternity.

The nicety of many of his distinctions, and the scrupulosity of his conscience, arose, not merely from the metaphysical character of his mind, but from its high spirituality. His conscience, like the sensitive plant, shrunk from every touch that was calculated, however remotely, to affect it. On this account, he could not subscribe what he did not understand; he could not profess to believe where he had not sufficient evidence; he could not promise to obey if he did not intend to perform, or if he questioned the right to command. He was not a quibbling sophist who delighted to perplex and entangle, but a Christian casuist, alive to the authority of God, and concerned only to know and to do his will.

In the high-toned character of Baxter's religion, we are furnished with an illustrious instance of the efficacious grace of God. It was this which made him all that he was, and effected by him all that he did. No man would have been more disposed than himself to magnify its richness, its freeness, and its power. Whatever mistakes may be supposed to belong to his theological creed, they affected not his view of this principle in the divine administration, or his experience of its power. But grace blessed him not only in bestowing pardon, and inducing its acceptance, but by producing conformity of character to God, and meetness for the enjoyment of heaven; this he cultivated and experienced in an eminent degree. During more than half a century, he adorned, by every Christian virtue, the doctrine of God, his Saviour, and died cherishing the deepest humility and self-abasement, yet rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

In studying the character of Richard Baxter, then, while I would do honour to the man, and justice to his talents; while I would speak in the strongest terms of his genius and his elo-

quence; while I would venerate him as the leader of the noble army of Nonconformist confessors, whose labours and sufferings have secured for them a deathless renown, I would above all contemplate him as the MAN OF GOD, strong in faith, rich in the fruits of love, and adorned with the beauties of holiness. In these respects he had probably few equals, and no superiors, even in an age when eminent characters were not rare. But what God did for him he can do for others; and what a world might this be, were every country furnished with but a few such men as RICHARD BAXTER!

THE END OF PART FIRST.

PART II.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

RICHARD BAXTER.

CHAPTER I.

WORKS ON THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.

Introductory Observations on the Theological Literature of the period—Arrangement of this Part of the Work—Importance of the Evidences of Religion—'Unreasonableness of Infidelity'—Dedication to Broghill—Intended as a Reply to Clement Writer—Nature and Plan of the Work—'Reasons of the Christian Religion'—View of the Work—'More Reasons for the Christian Religion'—Intended as a Reply to Lord Herbert—'On the Immortality of the Soul'—Notice of First Attack in English on this Doctrine—Glanvil—Dr. Henry More—Baxter's Notions of the Soul's Immateriality—'Certainty of the World of Spirits'—Singular Nature of this Book—Remarks on Witchcraft and Apparitions—Baxter, the First Original Writer in English on the Evidences of Revelation—Mornay—Grotius—Bishop Fotherby—Stillingfleet—Concluding Observations.

HAVING completed the regular memoir of Baxter's public and private life, we now proceed to what may be regarded as the second part of this work, an historical and critical account of his very numerous writings. These occupied the principal part of his time for many years, and by these he will continue, though dead, to profit the church of God for ages to come. I have previously avoided almost every thing respecting his works, but the enumeration of them in the respective periods in which they appeared. To have noticed them in connexion with his life and times, would either have been destructive of the continuity of the narrative, or to avoid this, the account must have been so brief and general, as greatly to destroy its interest. I have, therefore, reserved the consideration of his writings till the close of his life, that I might give them an entirely distinct department.

The remark which is commonly made respecting authors, that they are chiefly to be known by their writings, is only to a limited extent applicable to Baxter. The former part of this work shows, that independently of his writings, he would have been known to posterity as one of the most considerable men of his times, in the class to which he belonged. He took an active part in all those transactions that distinguished the religious body with which he was connected, and whose affairs often involved the politics and interests of the nation at large. His influence among his brethren throughout the country, the respect in which he was held by the government, his popularity as a preacher, and the sufferings which he endured, all prove that his title to celebrity does not exclusively rest on his published works. He was not a mere recluse student, or a professional writer; but an active, laborious, and public-spirited man.

Still, the writings of Baxter, which formed so important a portion of those labours in which he so long engaged, were regarded by himself as among the chief means of his usefulness, and furnish us with such a comprehensive view of his mind, that they are justly entitled, in a life of him, to the most ample consideration. By their means, too, his usefulness has been extended and perpetuated beyond the period of his own existence, and far beyond the immediate sphere of his personal labours.

Baxter lived at a time when the literature of Great Britain was influenced in an extraordinary degree by the peculiar circumstances of a civil and ecclesiastical nature, which then occurred; after it had made considerable progress in some departments, but before it had acquired that fixed character, and definite form, which it assumed in the course of the following century. For a long period after the Reformation, the chief subject which occupied the attention of the th_ological writers of England was the Popish controversy. They judged it then necessary to act both offensively and defensively towards the church of Rome; to maintain the grounds on which the reformed church separated from that corrupt system; and to show that its doctrine, ceremonies, and genius, were all at variance with Christianity. English divinity was then also a new thing; hence it became of more importance to supply a wholesome pabulum, than to expend much labour in dressing it; to furnish the converts from Rome with food of such a quality as would most effectually preserve them from longing after the delicacies of the imperial strumpet.

Out of the controversy, respecting the principles of the Reformation, arose the puritanical and the nonconformist debates. Many, from the beginning, were not content to stop at Canterbury; they conceived that the principles of the Reformation required them to proceed further; they wished to divest themselves of every rag and relic which had belonged to the mother of abominations; and sought to save their souls, not merely by a speedy, but by a far-distant flight from her. Hence the questions about imposition, ecclesiastical authority, church government, forms and vestments. The influence of the court, which was never reformed, except in name, and the timid and worldly policy of church rulers, were constantly opposed to too wide a separation from Rome.

From this state of things sprang the nonconformist separation from the Anglican church, and the numerous discussions which occupied so large a portion of our theological literature down to the times of Baxter. No period of rest and liberty had really been enjoyed. The public mind had come to no settled conclusions on many important points. Debates on matters apparently trifling, were often fiercely maintained, because they implied a diversity of opinion on other things of far more importance than themselves.

Where much oppression was exercised on the one hand, and much suffering endured on the other; in the one case a constant struggle to maintain authority, and in the other to secure existence; it would be vain to expect the refinements and delicacies of literature. Biblical science, profound and elegant theological disquisition, the exercises of taste and fancy, in reference to religion, could not flourish in such circumstances. Among the Puritans and Nonconformists, especially, these things are not to be looked for. They were men born to suffering and to combat. Accustomed to the din of war from their infancy, they insensibly acquired its language, and something of its spirit. Their polemics were a part of their existence; their sufferings sometimes chastened, but more frequently roused their spirits. Hence they studied not so much the polish of the weapon as its temper; and were more careful to maintain their sentiments, than fastidious in the mode of expressing them.

Their writings were, from these circumstances, in a great measure, limited to two departments, practical and controversial; the former including all that was felt to be necessary for the support of the Christian life in times of peculiar distress and peril; the latter, all that was deemed necessary in self-defence or vin-

dication, or for the promotion of those principles, on account of which they were exposed to great tribulation. In both these departments they almost exhaust the subjects which they discuss. They brought forward both argument and consolation in masses. They had neither time nor disposition to prune or abridge. It was often necessary to meet the adversary with the weapon which could be immediately seized, or most effectively employed; and as the appetite for instruction was voracious, the supply was required to be abundant, rather than of the finest quality.

"The agitated state of surrounding circumstances gave them continual proof of the instability of all things temporal; and inculcated on them the necessity of seeking a happiness which might be independent of external things. They thus practically learned the vanity and nothingness of life, except in its relation to eternity; and they declared to their fellow-creatures the mysteries of the kingdom of God, with the tone of men who knew that the lightest word which they spoke outweighed in the balance of reason, as well as of the sanctuary, the value of all earth's plans, and politics, and interests. They were upon high and firm ground. They stood in the midst of that tempestuous ocean, secure on the rock of ages; and as they uttered to those around them their invitations or remonstrances, or consolations, they thought not of the tastes, but of the necessities of men,—they thought only of the difference between being lost and being saved, and they cried aloud, and spared not.

"There is no doubt a great variety of thought, and feeling, and expression, to be met with in the theological writers of that class; but deep and solemn seriousness is the common character of them all. They seem to have felt much. Religion was not allowed to remain as an unused theory in their heads; they were forced to live on it as their food, and to have recourse to it as their only strength and comfort. Hence their thoughts are never given as abstract views: they are always deeply impregnated with sentiment. Their style reminds us of the light which streams through the stained and storied windows of an ancient cathedral. It is not light merely, but light modified by the rich hues, and the quaint forms, and the various incidents of the pictured medium through which it passes: so these venerable worthies do not merely give us truth, but truth in its historical application to the various struggles, and difficulties, and dejections, of their strangely-chequered lives."*

* Erskine's 'Introductory Essay to Baxter's Saint's Rest,' pp. 7, 9.

These beautiful sentences accurately characterise the writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists in general, while they justly explain the causes of those peculiarities by which they are distinguished.

From the time of the civil wars, another circumstance affected the character of our theological writing. The restraints on the press, and consequently on the minds of men, being then taken away, every man who began to breathe the air of freedom, and who deemed himself capable of putting his thoughts together, judged that he had a call to do so. There was no longer any fear of the Star Chamber or High Commission. A nation of writers was born in a day. Sects increased, controversies multiplied, the press teemed with an innumerable progeny

> "Hourly conceived,
> And hourly born;"

whose nature partook of the quality of the circumstances which gave them birth. They were crude, ill-formed, and misshaped; and capable, for the most part, of only an ephemeral existence. "Then," as Milton says, "was the time in special, to write and speak what might help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The temple of Janus, with his controversial faces, might not insignificantly be regarded as set open. All the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth; but truth was prepared to grapple with falsehood, and sustained no injury in a free and open encounter." [b]

Of the infinite and motley generation of writers thus produced, but a small number of master spirits could be expected to survive that oblivion to which the great body was inevitably doomed; and even these could not escape injury from the bad qualities of those circumstances by which they were constantly surrounded. Only a few men, of any age, are destined for immortality on earth; the far greater number must always be forgotten. Spencer, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, and a few others, are the men of their respective periods, to whom alone almost the world of intellect looks back with admiration, as giving character and importance to the times in which they lived.

Hooker, and Hall, Taylor, Barrow, and Chillingworth, Owen, Baxter, and Howe, occupy a similar place among the religious writers of their respective times. The great majority of their contemporaries have already ceased to exist as authors; and even a more select class are slowly floating to an oblivion which

[b] Areopagetica, Prose Works, p. 394. Edit. 1697.

certainly awaits them. The principal productions of the above, and perhaps of a few more writers, relate to matters of universal and perpetual interest, which render it improbable that they will ever be left behind by the stream of time. Their principles are founded in immutable truth, while the strength of their intellectual powers, or the brilliancy of their imaginations, are not likely to be surpassed by any of the future race of mortals.

But even they were infected or influenced by the circumstances to which we have adverted. None of them are faultless. If they are distinguished for their splendid qualities, they are also strongly marked by deformities and vices. They wrote too much, and therefore must often have written carelessly. They entered deeply into the controversies of the times, and hence caught something of their tone and spirit. They knew not when to stop, or to consider their subject done. They choke their pages with learned quotations, and load them with marginal stuffings, which often savour more of conceit and pedantry than tend to the reader's edification. They studied impression rather than beauty, and often astonish us by the rugged grandeur of their conceptions, rather than please by the felicity of their language, or the harmony of their periods.

These remarks apply most fully and particularly to Baxter, as a writer. He possesses all the good and high qualities which have been ascribed to the choice spirits with whom he ranked. He was inferior to none of them in fertility of mind, loftiness of genius, or versatility of talent. He wrote more than any of his brethren; and more, of what he did write, continues to be read and admired. But if he partook of their excellencies, he also shared largely in their faults; the former belonged properly to the man, the latter to his circumstances.

Baxter wrote both voluminously and on almost every topic of religion. His works form a system and library of themselves. Instead, therefore, of reviewing them in the chronological order of their publication, I have divided them into classes, to each of which I have devoted a chapter. Following the best arrangement I could adopt, under the several heads of—Works on the Evidences of Religion—On the Doctrines of Religion—On Conversion—On Christian Experience—On Christian Ethics—On Catholic Communion—On Nonconformity—On Popery—On Antinomianism—On the Baptist, Quaker, and Millennarian Controversies—Historical and Political Works—Devotion-

al, Expository, and Poetical Works; some account will be found of every thing which Baxter published.

By pursuing this course, a more accurate view may be obtained of his genius and labours as a writer; while the reader may make his own selection of topics, on which to consult the opinions of this eminent man. In general, I have not deemed it necessary to present an analysis of his works. This would have been impracticable within the bounds of my undertaking, and perhaps uninteresting to the reader. I have, however, always represented their nature and design; the circumstances in which they were produced, and any known effects or consequences which arose from them. In this examination of his writings, various occurrences, omitted in the regular narrative of his life, will be found, and notices of many of his contemporaries, both friends and opponents, will be given. The remainder of this chapter will, therefore, be devoted to the works on the Evidences of Religion.

The evidences of religion do not always occupy that place in the attention of men, which their great importance merits. The truth of revelation is so much taken for granted among Christians, that few, comparatively, give themselves the trouble of examining into the grounds of their faith. But the mind of Baxter was so constituted that it could not be satisfied without the most rigid examination of that subject, which was of all others the most important to him. He was early affected with doubts and difficulties, to remove which, he instituted the most rigid inquiry into the truth of religion. He made it his business to sift and weigh every argument, and to give to the various kinds and degrees of evidence, only that weight in the scale which intrinsically belonged to them. On this subject, the following passage from his own life is entitled to attention.

"Among truths certain in themselves, all are not equally certain unto me; and even of the mysteries of the Gospel, I must needs say with Mr. Richard Hooker, in his 'Eccles. Polit.,' 'that whatever men may pretend, the subjective certainty cannot go beyond the objective evidence; for it is caused thereby, as the print on the wax is caused by that on the seal.' I do more of late, therefore, than ever, discern a necessity of a methodical procedure in maintaining the doctrine of Christianity, and of beginning at natural verities, as presupposed fundamentally to supernatural; though God may, when he pleases, reveal

all at once, and even natural truths by supernatural revelation. It is a marvellous great help to my faith, to find it built on so sure foundations, and so consonant to the law of nature. I am not so foolish as to pretend my certainty to be greater than it is, merely because it is a dishonour to be less certain; nor will I by shame be kept from confessing the infirmities, which those have as much as I, who hypocritically reproach me with them.

"My certainty that I am a man, is before my certainty that there is a God; for *quod facit notum, est magis notum.* My certainty that there is a God, is greater than my certainty that he requireth love and holiness of his creature; my certainty of this is greater than my certainty of the life of reward and punishment hereafter; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the endless duration of it, and of the immortality of individuate souls; my certainty of the Deity is greater than my certainty of the Christian faith; my certainty of the Christian faith, in its essentials, is greater than my certainty of the perfection and infallibility of all the holy Scriptures; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the meaning of many particular texts, and so of the truth of many particular doctrines, or of the canonicalness of some certain books. So that as you see by what gradations my understanding doth proceed, so also that my certainty differeth as the evidences differ. And they that will begin all their certainty with that of the truth of the Scripture, as the *principium cognoscendi,* may meet me at the same end; but they must give me leave to undertake to prove to a heathen or infidel, the being of a God, and the necessity of holiness, and the certainty of a reward or punishment, even while yet he denieth the truth of Scripture, and in order to his believing it to be true."[c]

Whatever may be thought of the necessity of pursuing the above plan, in the discussion of the evidences of Christianity, there is much justice in the train of Baxter's argument. The man who looked so narrowly and cautiously for proof of every thing that he believed, was undoubtedly well qualified to write on the subject of evidence, for the benefit of others.

In directing our attention to the writings of Baxter on the evidences of religion, the first work which presents itself, both in the order of time and that of nature, is his 'Unreasonableness of

[c] Life, part i. p. 128.

Infidelity.'[d] This work is dedicated to Lord Broghill, then Lord President of the Council of State for the affairs of Scotland. Baxter, we have already seen, was well acquainted with him; he speaks of him in this dedication, very respectfully, as a religious man, while he gives him, as was his custom, some very wholesome admonition. In this respect Baxter's dedications are worthy of imitation. They are polite and courteous, but never flattering or adulatory. He knew how to point a compliment, but never forgot, in addressing others, what was due to his own character, as a man of God. There is much beauty as well as fidelity in the address to Lord Broghill, who made a considerable figure in the political world for many years. The occasion of writing and publishing this book, which appeared in 1655, he tells us, was his forming "a troublesome acquaintance with Clement Writer, of Worcester,[e] an ancient man, who had long seemed a forward professor of religiousness, and of a good conversation, but had been perverted to he knew not what. A Seeker he professed to be, but was either a juggling Papist, or an infidel; more probably the latter. He had written a scornful book against the ministry, called 'Jus Divinum Presbyterii,' and afterwards, two more against the Scriptures and me. His assertion to me was, that no man is bound to believe in Christ, who doth not see confirming miracles with his own eyes."[f]

It is very instructive to find the grand argument against Christianity, of which David Hume supposed himself to be the inventor, anticipated by a fanatical Seeker of the times of the Commonwealth. Mr. Hume's favourite dogma was, that a miracle is incapable of such proof from human testimony, as to entitle it to belief. Clement Writer's idea seems to have been, "that whatever reality might have belonged to the miracles of Christ, they cannot be proved so as to oblige us." Campbell successfully demolished the ablest and most acute sceptic of modern times; Baxter was no less successful in overturning his adversary.[g]

He intended it also as a supplement to the second part of his

[d] Works, vol. xx.

[e] A curious account of Clement Writer is given by Edwards in his 'Gangrena.' In his usual style of invective, he calls him "an arch heretic—a fearful apostate—an old wolf—and a subtile man." He represents him as a materialist and mortalist—a denier of the divinity of the Scriptures, and of the rights of the ministry, unless possessed of apostolic powers.—Part i. p. 27.

[f] Life, part i. p. 116.

[g] As a piece of beautiful argument, there is, perhaps, no book in the English language better entitled to the reader's attention, than 'The Treatise on

'Saint's Rest,' which treats of the proofs of the truth and certain futurity of our rest, and attempts to show that the Scriptures which promise it, are the perfect, infallible word of God. Although the propriety of referring to the truth of the divine testimony as the foundation of hope in the rest of God cannot be called in question, the necessity of devoting the fourth part of a devotional treatise to an inquiry into the truth of religion, is very questionable. This was objected to at the time, as appears from his preface to this part of the latter editions of his 'Rest.' He did not alter the book, however; but the objections appear to have led him to discuss the subject in this separate treatise.

'The Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' is divided into four parts. In the first, he considers the Spirit's extrinsic witness to Christianity, with the question proposed to him by Clement Writer, whether the miraculous works of Christ and his disciples do oblige those to believe who never saw them? In the second, he considers the Spirit's internal witness to the truth of Christianity. In the third, he furnishes a demonstration that the Spirit and works of Christ were the finger of God, to prevent what he considered to be the sin against the Holy Ghost; and in the last, he endeavours to show that the arrogancy of reason and the pride of ignorance, are the great causes of men's infidelity and quarrelling with the Word of God.

Such is the outline of the plan pursued in this very valuable treatise. It evidently embraces, with one exception, which I shall afterwards notice, the great leading arguments on which Christianity is founded, and by which it may be morally demonstrated to have come from God. He naturally and properly commences with the external, or what he calls the extrinsic testimony of the Spirit, which he considers to be the miraculous works performed by Christ and his apostles. These, from their magnitude, from their number and variety, from the circumstances in which they were performed, and from the overwhelming conviction they produced at the time, satisfactorily prove that the Christian revelation is from heaven and not from men. The following appears to me to place the argument from miracles in a very forcible point of view.

"If any shall seal the doctrine that he bringeth in the name of God, with the testimony of such numerous, evident, undeni-

Miracles,' by Dr. Campbell. As a mere intellectual exercise, it will richly repay a careful examination.

able miracles, it is the highest proof of the truth of his doctrine, that flesh and blood can expect. And if God do not give us sufficient help to discover a falsehood in the testimony, we must take it for his voice and truth. For if God shall let men or devils use the highest mark of a divine testimony to confirm a lie, while they pretend it to be divine, and do not control this, he leaveth men utterly remediless. For we cannot go up into heaven to see what hand these things are wrought by. We are certain they cannot be done without divine permission and commission; we are sure that God is the true, just, merciful Governor of the world; and as sure as it belongeth to a Rector to promulgate, as well as enact his own laws, they cannot oblige us, till promulgated, that is, sufficiently revealed. And if he shall suffer any to say, 'God sent me to you on this message, and to back this affirmation with such a stream of miracles through a whole age by many thousand hands, and shall not any way contradict them, nor give us sufficient help to discover the delusion, then it must needs be taken for God's own act, seeing by office he is our Rector; or else that God hath given up the world to the dispose and government of the devil. Now, let any man of right reason judge whether it be possible that the just and merciful God, being naturally our governor as we are his creatures, should give permission or commission to the devil to deceive the world in his name, by changing and working against the very course of nature, and by means that no man can possibly try; and so, leave his creature remedilessly to be misled and perish."

The theological scholar will scarcely require to be informed that in this passage the substance of the argument of Farmer's celebrated treatise on miracles, is comprised. The object of that able and unanswerable work is to show, that miracles prove the truth of the doctrine, not the doctrine the reality of the miracles; and that in every case in which they have been really performed, they have been wrought by a divine agency, and in proof of a message or testimony sent from God. I am far from thinking that Baxter has maintained his argument with the same clearness and consistency as Farmer: but making allowance for the manner in which he was accustomed to treat every subject, it is precisely of the same nature, and managed with distinguished ability.

Baxter concedes to Satan a power which Farmer denies to

[b] Works, vol. xx. p. 333.

him—that of operating on human creatures in a supernatural manner. In this very book, he tells numerous apparition and ghost stories; but they are not introduced to prove that Satan has the power of working miracles; but to show from the opposite nature of Christ's works and his, that they could not proceed from the same quarter. It seems to me very evident, though Baxter did not pursue it, that the argument in the passage extracted above, goes all the length of Farmer.

The view which he took of miracles as the grand testimony of the Spirit to the truth, led him to consider the nature of that channel through which this species of evidence has been brought down to us. Here he takes up the historical testimony, or the universal and unbroken tradition, not of the church, but of all kinds of moral and historic evidence, that the Scriptures in our hands are the writings of the persons whose names they bear, and that the facts which they record have been recognised or admitted from the very beginning. The argument in this and the preceding part is maintained with great power, and scarcely inferior, in clearness and cogency, to the masterly reasoning of Paley.

It is singular that, in treating the external evidence, he takes no notice of the subject of prophecy. He assigns no reason for this omission; and therefore I apprehend he merely regarded it as unnecessary to the strength of his argument, and would not allow himself to be diverted from its regular prosecution by the introduction of another topic, which would have required very extended consideration, and perhaps have distracted both his own mind and that of his readers. And as Writer had not adverted to the difficulties connected with prophecy, but to those belonging to miracles, he did not feel called to enter on that subject.

In the second treatise in the volume, he examines very particularly the Spirit's internal testimony to the truth of the Gospel. By this intrinsic evidence he does not mean, the proofs which the Scriptures themselves furnish of their divine origin; what Owen calls their "self-evidencing power;" but "Christ's witness within us," which he regards as "the believer's special advantage against the temptations to infidelity." It is founded on "He that believeth hath the witness in himself,"[1] (1 John v. 10,) a text which has been variously expounded, and which Baxter thinks

[1] In this important passage I believe that the apostle uses the word testimony, μαρτυρια, by a common figure of speech, for the thing testified. This, as appears from the following verse, is the fact, that believers have eternal life

signifies that those enlightened and holy impressions formed on the soul by the Spirit, become in us a standing testimony or witness for the truth within us, as the word and miracles of Christ are without us. "For none but the sacred Redeemer of the world, approved by the Father, and working by his Spirit, could do such works as are done on the souls of all that are truly sanctified." This is, in fact, an argument derived from the power and adaptation of Christianity, considered as a moral remedy. It is rather the evidence of experiment than an internal witness. For, after all that can be said on the subject of the inward witness, it resolves itself entirely into the consciousness of the individual that he has truly received the divine testimony, and that the feelings he experiences, and the outward conduct which he pursues, are the result of God's word operating upon him. This experience is often peculiarly satisfactory to the Christian himself, though it will go but little way in convincing unbelievers. On this view of the subject, Baxter says many admirable things. His illustration of the apostle's triumphant challenge, Rom. viii. 35—39, is exceedingly beautiful and appropriate.

It may appear very singular that he should take up the 'Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost,' at such length as he does in this treatise: but he was naturally led to it by the particular view which he takes of the miracles of Christ; his grand object being to show that they were works which could not have been performed by the devil; and that they are, therefore, demonstrative of a divine mission, which whosoever rejects or calumniates must perish. On the nature of the particular sin of which he treats, he perhaps dwells at too great length for his purpose; but he has a great deal on the topic itself which is valuable and interesting. The following passage, in which he sums up his own views of the subject, is worthy of the reader's attention.[k]

"This much is out of doubt with me, that this sin lieth in the

through the Son of God:—"He who believeth this testimony—has that which Christ's undertaking is designed to bestow, viz. eternal life—in himself; it is not an object of future hope, but of present enjoyment," ver. 12. This interpretation is supported by the whole context, and removes every difficulty from the passage.

[k] Though in possession of Baxter's work when I published my 'Discourses on the Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,' I had forgotten that he wrote on the subject. Had I thought to have consulted him, I would have availed myself of some of his ideas. For though I do not agree with him in many of his remarks and reasonings, various things which he suggests are

rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit extraordinarily then attesting Christ's doctrine, as being the highest and last objective remedy of unbelief. The three persons in the blessed trinity have each one their several ways of recovering man, and for the remission of his sin, and there are several ways of sinning against each of them, as men sin against these dispensations. When we had sinned against the Creator and his perfect law, he gave us his Son to be our Redeemer. There was his proper work for our pardon, together with the acceptance of the price of redemption and the giving us into the hands of his Son as his redeemed ones. The Son made satisfaction to justice, and sent forth to the world a conditional pardon under his hand and seal, with his word and Spirit to persuade them to accept it. This is his work antecedent to our believing. The Spirit enditeth and sealeth this written, delivered pardon, by mighty works, and importuneth the hearts of sinners to accept it. If it be accepted, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, do actually pardon us. If it be not accepted merely as sent by the word of the Son, we sin against the Son by unbelief. If it be not accepted or believed as sealed and urged by the Spirit (yea, or if sealed extrinsically only), then it is the sin against the Spirit, supposing that seal be discerned and considered of, and yet resolvedly rejected. So that here are three, the last remedying means rejected at once. When man was fallen, the Father provideth a sacrifice for his sin, and but one sacrifice; the Son tendereth to us a remedying covenant, and but one such covenant. The Spirit of Christ, especially in his extraordinary works, is the convincing, attesting seal, to draw men to believe, and there is but one such Spirit and seal. He that sinned against the law of works, hath all these remedies in their several orders. But if you refuse this one sacrifice, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; if you refuse this one remedying covenant, there is no other covenant after it to be expected; and if you refuse this sealing and sanctifying Spirit, which would draw you into the covenant, there is no other Spirit or seal to be expected. This much is out of doubt; and therefore, he that finally continueth to refuse this sacrifice, covenant, and seal of the Spirit, shall perish for ever."[1]

The last part of the work on infidelity, strikes at the grand

worthy of attention; and the reader who chooses to compare the doctrine of the Discourses with the passage quoted in the text, will find that we agree very nearly in our conclusion, as to the character of the offence, and what constitutes its irremissible nature.

[1] Works, xx. 251.—This part of the work on infidelity, viz. 'The Treatise

root of the evil: the pride of man's intellect or reason, and the obstinacy of his ignorance. It belongs to the heart rather than to the understanding. This was the case in the days of our Lord and his apostles; it was the case in the days of Baxter; and it is exemplified in a still greater degree now than formerly. There is less argumentative or speculative infidelity; but probably much more sullen, determined, and high-minded opposition to the word of God, than at any former period of the world's history. The light is greater, and hence the resistance to that light must, to be successful, be the more resolute.

To supply what Baxter deemed the deficiencies of the work we have now considered, he published in 1667, 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion.'[m] This is a quarto volume, of six hundred pages, on which the author must have bestowed a large portion of attention. There are two dedications prefixed to it, one addressed to the Christian reader, with another to the "hypocrite reader." It is worthy of observation, that he assigns, as one reason for the writing of this work, his desire to promote the "conversion of idolaters and infidels to God and to the Christian faith." At a period when few were directing their thoughts to the state of the heathen world, it appears from various parts of the writings of Baxter, that his mind was deeply occupied with it. As we have already seen, beside being the friend of Boyle, he was the correspondent of Elliot, and the ardent admirer of his zeal and his success. He expresses in one of these dedications, the great pain he felt at the "doleful thought that five parts of the world were still heathens and Mahometans; and that Christian princes and preachers did no more for their recovery." "The opening of the true method for such a work," he says, "is the highest part of my design."

How far his work is adapted to this end, is a different question. It is divided into two parts: 'Of Natural Religion, or Godliness;' and 'Of Christianity and Supernatural Religion.' In the first part, he considers what man is in himself, a creature of sense and reason, "a living wight, having an active power, an understanding to guide it, and a will to command it." What he is in relation to things beneath him, to his fellow-creatures around him, and to the great First Cause above him.

on the Sin against the Holy Ghost,' appeared in German, some time after its publication in English.—*Walchii Bib. Theol. Sel.* tom. i. p. 254.

[m] Works, vols. xx. and xxi.

This leads him to consider what this Cause is in itself—God; and what he is in relation to his creatures, especially man; in which he treats of him as our Owner, Governor, Benefactor; and of man's obligations to God, as his End or chief Good. He then discusses the nature of man's present condition, the evidences of a future state of retribution; and the natural light we have of God's mercy, and of the means of recovery.

From this brief sketch of the plan pursued in this part of the treatise, the reader will perceive that it is in fact a dissertation on natural religion; or, an attempt to ascertain how far men may become acquainted with God, with their own duties, and with a future state, independent of revelation. The argument is conducted with very considerable ability and regularity, and displays a great deal of thought, and, like all the other works of Baxter, a great fund of reading. On the nature and uses of natural religion, considerable diversity of opinion prevails. It seems generally to have been overlooked, that man has never been left entirely to the guidance of his own unassisted reason in the affair of religion. From the beginning, there was a revelation of the character of God, beyond that which belonged to the mere works of God. In paradise God conversed with Adam, and gave him information above what his unassisted faculties might have derived from the external manifestations of divine power and goodness. These original communications were never entirely lost; and hence, though the invisible things of God may be understood from the things which he has made, so that men are left without excuse, the responsibility of the creature must be considered as greatly increased by the superadded revelation, though it has been in many instances thoughtlessly or wantonly lost. Baxter's 'Reasons,' may be regarded as preparing the way for the unanswerable work of Halyburton, 'Natural Reason insufficient; and Revealed, necessary to Man's Happiness in his present state.' A book far more satisfactory than any other which has yet been published on this part of the deistical controversy.[n]

The second part of Baxter's work is devoted to a regular examination of the evidences of Christianity considered as a revelation from God, and is altogether a very able performance.

[n] Halyburton's work was published in 4to, in 1714, after the death of the author, which took place in 1712. He was professor of divinity in the University of St. Andrew; and was no less distinguished for his sound and ardent piety, than by his masculine understanding and his extensive learning.

Contrary to the plan of some works on the evidences of revelation, which leave out every thing concerning the matter or subject of the revelation itself; Baxter makes a full statement of the nature and properties of the Christian religion, and of its "congruities;" or, in other words, its suitableness to our natural notions of God, and its adaptation to our own characters and wants. He then proceeds to discuss the "witness of Jesus Christ; or, the demonstrative evidence of his verity and authority." This he arranges in four parts: Prophecy, or antecedent testimony to his Messiahship—His personal character, as he is the image of God in his person, life, and doctrine—His miracles and those of his disciples—And the constant evidence of his power and character in the salvation of men. Beside these, there are many collateral topics examined, and a multitude of difficulties, supposed to belong to the Christian faith, met and resolved.

It is not practicable, within the limits to which I am under the necessity of restricting myself, to convey a full idea of the valuable reasonings of this work: but even the imperfect outline now given, may show that it is well entitled to the reader's attention. Some of the peculiarities of Baxter's style and manner of treating subjects, exist in it; but it is full of the indications of his genius, originality, and powerful intellect. His piety also richly imbues the whole. It contains a prayer, which, were it not too long to be quoted here, I would introduce at large, as one of the sublimest pieces of devotion in the English language. I do not know whether most to admire the holy ardour which it breathes, the power by which it is sustained, or the felicitous language in which it is expressed. The concluding paragraph I will venture to give, entreating the reader to examine the whole. Addressing the divine Spirit, he says:

"As thou art the agent and advocate of Jesus my Lord, O plead his cause effectually in my soul against the suggestions of Satan and my unbelief; and finish his healing, saving work, and let not the flesh or world prevail. Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the author of my prayers, the spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the earnest of mine inheritance. Let not my nights be so long and my days so short, nor sin eclipse those beams which have often illuminated my soul. Without thee, books are senseless scrawls, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinence, and folly. Transcribe those sacred precepts on my

heart, which by thy dictates and inspirations are recorded in thy holy word. I refuse not thy help for tears and groans; but O shed abroad that love upon my heart, which may keep it in a continual life of love. Teach me the work which I must do in heaven; refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys. Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praises of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings; and conquer the terrors of death and hell. Make me the more heavenly, by how much the faster I am hastening to heaven; and let my last thoughts, words, and works on earth, be likest to those which shall be my first in the state of glorious immortality; where the kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God will for ever be All, and in all; of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, to whom be glory for ever.—Amen."

In a long appendix to the preceding work, he discusses the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and immateriality; and in 1672, he published a small duodecimo volume, entitled, 'More Reasons for the Christian Religion, and no Reason against it;'[o] designed as a second appendix to his work on the Evidences. Part of this little treatise is intended as an answer to an unknown letter-writer, who charged the holy Scriptures with contradictions; and the chief part consists of animadversions on Lord Herbert's work 'De Veritate,' which had not met with any answer previously in this country. Herbert was the earliest formal deistical writer produced by England, whose labours have attracted any attention. The first edition of his work 'De Veritate' appeared at Paris in 1624. It was republished in London, along with his treatise 'De Causis Errorum,' and his 'Religio Laici,' in 1633. His work 'De Religione Gentilium,' which Baxter does not appear to have seen, was printed at Amsterdam, in 1663. Herbert's great object seems to have been, to overthrow revelation, and substitute what he called natural religion, or deism, in its place.

Baxter addresses this little work, in a letter written with great delicacy, to Sir Henry Herbert, influenced, he says, "by his personal, ancient obligations to him; by his approved wisdom and moderation, in the ways of charity and peace, in these trying times; and by his relation to the noble author on whose writings he animadverts. As it is your honour," he says, "to

[o] Works, vol. xxi.

be the brother of so learned and ingenious a lord, and the brother of so excellently holy, as well as learned and ingenious a person, Mr. George Herbert; so it obligeth me the more to give you an account of this animadversion."

He complains of "the sad case of many of his acquaintance, and of the increase of infidelity of late, especially among debauched, sensual gallants," whose increase was chiefly to be ascribed to the profligacy of the reigning monarch, and the dissoluteness of the court. Baxter points out the true source of Herbert's infidelity; and, indeed, of all the infidelity of the Christian world—the moral state of the heart. "Had so great a wit," he says, "had but *the internal conditions* due to such an intellectual apprehension, as his and your holy and excellent brother had, no doubt but our supernatural revelations and verities would have appeared evident to him, and possessed his soul with as sweet a gust, and fervent, ascendant, holy love, as breatheth in G. Herbert's poems; and would have made them as clear to him in their kind, as some of his *notitiæ communes*. The truth is, as he was too low for us, who number not our divine revelations with the *verisimilia*, but with the certain verities; so he was too high for the atheistical sensualists of his age."

Baxter treats his lordship with great respect and candour; but remarks very freely on his fallacies, inconsistencies, and the imperfections of the scheme which he would substitute in the place of God's revelation. Leland makes honourable mention of Baxter, as the first of our English writers who replied to Lord Herbert. It is not to be considered, however, a full answer. Baxter was followed by Locke, who, both in his 'Treatise on the Human Understanding,' and in his work on the 'Reasonableness of Christianity,' meets the Baron of Cherbury. Whitby also wrote a very excellent tract on 'The Verity and Usefulness of the Christian Revelation,' in which his lordship's system is considered. But the grand and conclusive reply to the father of our English Deists, is, the work of Professor Halyburton, referred to in a former page. It has alleged every thing necessary to be said on this subject.

In 1682, Baxter published, in a small 12mo volume, two treatises, 'Of the Immortality of Man's Soul, and of the Nature of it, and of other Spirits.' The first is in the form of a letter, addressed to an unknown doubter, whose epistle he prefixes;

the other is a reply to Dr. Henry More's animadversions addressed to Baxter in a private letter, and afterwards published by him in the second edition of Joseph Glanvil's 'Sadducismus Triumphatus; or, History of Apparitions.' In the preface to these discourses, he refers to his former works, the 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and the 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' and thus connects them together. The appendix to his 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' is, in fact, a laboured "defence of the soul's immortality against the Somatists and Epicureans and other pseudo-philosophers;" of which this small treatise is, therefore, but a continuation. His great object is to prove the immateriality and immortality of the soul; not by the testimony of revelation; but by the light of nature and metaphysical arguments. For this kind of discussion Baxter was peculiarly fitted by his natural acuteness, and the metaphysical character of his mind. He could "distinguish things that differ" more readily than most men of his own or any other age; and the reader, who attentively examines these treatises, will find that most of the arguments usually derived from reason, and from the acknowledged properties of mind and matter, ar adduced by him.

The doctrine of the immateriality and immortality of the soul, was first attacked in English, as far as I know, in a pamphlet, published at Amsterdam, in 1643, and re-published, enlarged, at London, in 1655. 'Man's Mortallitie, wherein 'tis proved, both theologically and philosophically, that whole man (as a rational creature) is a compound wholly mortal, contrary to that common distinction of soul and body: and that the present going of the soul into Heaven or Hell is a meer fiction: and that at the resurrection is the beginning of our immortality, and then, actual condemnation and salvation, and not before,' &c. The author signs himself "R. O." Who or what he was, Archdeacon Blackburn says, cannot now be traced. I believe he was Richard Overton, one of the fierce republicans of the Commonwealth. The production is not destitute of talent but is altogether sceptical in its nature and tendency. It was answered in an anonymous pamphlet, 'The Prerogative of Man; or, his soul's immortality and high perfection defended, and explained against the rash and rude conceptions of a late writer, who hath inconsiderately ventured to impugn it.' 4to, 1645. Blackburn, who could not give the title of this pamphlet, sneers at the author of it, and represents it as very feeble.

I think differently; it is well written, and destitute neither of learning nor argument. Baxter's small treatises on this subject were written many years after these productions, so that he had probably forgotten them, if indeed he ever saw them among the ephemeræ of the Commonwealth.

The book of Glanvil, published by More, is a very singular production, and in many points resembles Baxter's book on apparitions and witches, noticed at the end of this chapter. The first part treats of the possibility of witches; the second, of their real existence. It is full of scriptural and philosophical arguments according to the views of the author, and abounds with ghost stories of all descriptions. Many of these are very striking, and authenticated by the names of the parties. The book originated in an occurrence at the house of John Mumpeson of Tedworth; which was, for some time, disturbed by the beating of an invisible drum every night. This happened in 1663. Glanvil published in 1666 some philosophical considerations, touching the being of witches and witchcraft; which laid the foundation of a great deal of discussion, that lasted till his death. As an apology for Baxter, it should be mentioned, that Glanvil was a clergyman, a chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty, and one of the first and most useful members of the Royal Society. Anthony Wood says, "that he was a person of more than ordinary parts: of a quick, warm, spruce, and gay fancy; and more lucky, at least in his own judgment, in his first hints and thoughts of things, than in his after notions, examined and digested by longer and more mature deliberation."[p] Baxter was acquainted with Glanvil, though after the Restoration they pursued very different courses. He speaks of him, in his 'Defence of the Mere Nonconformists,' with considerable respect, though he disapproved of part of his conduct. Among the Baxter MSS. there are several letters from Glanvil to Baxter, full of the warmest expressions of affection and admiration. In one of them, he begs Baxter's acceptance of the publication referred to; in another he acknowledges the honour done him by Baxter, in sending him his manuscript answer to the Bishop of Worcester. There is also a long letter, full of curious learning, in defence of the pre-existence of souls; a doctrine which Glanvil believed, and to which he would gladly have made Baxter a convert. He appears to have been an amiable, philosophical enthusiast.

[p] Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 496.

Dr. Henry More possessed great personal excellence, but had a very peculiar conformation of mind. Deeply read in the philosophy of Plato, the mysteries of the Cabalists, and a profound admirer of the Cartesian philosophy; he became the most learned mystic of his own, or perhaps of any other time; and one of the deepest students of the apocalyptic visions and prophecies. He was learned, but credulous; pious, but superstitious; philosophical, and yet the sport of vulgar fancies, and popular errors. His writings on philosophical, theological, and mystical subjects, are numerous, and were extensively read at the time; though now regarded rather as objects of curiosity, than sought after on account of their utility. Between More and Baxter there appears to have been some personal intimacy, and in several respects they were congenial spirits. In the second edition of Glanvil's 'Sadducismus Triumphatus,' published by More, he inserted a private letter from Baxter, with some animadversions on it, which led to what Baxter calls his "placid collation." According to More's account, Baxter was a "Psychopyrist, that is, a philosopher, who holds all created spirits to be a kind of more pure and subtile fire." Baxter complains that he held no such notion, but that his language thus interpreted had been entirely misunderstood. The following remarkable passage conveys an obscure idea of his speculations on this nice and difficult subject, and of the nature of the difference between him and More.

"Do you think," he asks, "that the soul carrieth a body out of the body inseparable with it, or only that it receiveth a new body when it passeth out of the old? If the latter, is there any instant of time between the dispossession of the old, and the possession of the new? If any, then the soul is some time without a body; and how can you tell how long? If not, what body is it that you can imagine so ready to receive it without any interposition? I have not been without temptation to over inquisitive thoughts about these matters; and I never had so much ado to overcome any such temptation, as that to the opinion of Averrhoes, that, as extinguished candles go all into one illuminated air, so separated souls go all into one common *anima mundi*, and lose their individuation, and that *materia receptiva individuat;* and then, indeed, your notion would be probable, for the *anima mundi mundum semper animat*, and so my separated soul should be still embodied in the world, and should have its part in the world's animation; but both Scrip-

ture and apparitions assure us of the individuation of spirits and separate souls.

"I confess to you that I have often told the Sadducees and infidels that urge seeming impossibilities against the resurrection, and the activity of separate souls for want of organs, that they are not sure that the soul taketh not with it, at its departure hence, some seminal material spirits, etherial and airy; and so that this spirituous or igneous body which it carrieth hence, is a semen to the body which it shall have at the resurrection: no man knoweth the contrary, and no man knoweth that it is so." [q]

The Christian reader will probably think that there is not much edification to be obtained from these speculations. The immateriality and immortality of the soul, are clearly taught in the sacred Scriptures, whose testimony, on these and many other subjects, is far more satisfactory than all the *à priori*, or metaphysical reasonings of the acutest minds. Baxter himself appears to have felt this, as he says, towards the conclusion of his first treatise: "But all that I have said to you, is but the *least part*, in comparison of the assurance which you may have by the full revelation of Jesus Christ, where the state, the doom, the rewards, and punishments of souls, are asserted."

The last work in this department is intimately connected with the preceding, though the strangest of all Baxter's productions. 'The Certainty of the World of Spirits fully evinced by unquestionable Histories of Apparitions and Witchcrafts, Operations, Voices, &c. Proving the Immortality of Souls, the Malice and Misery of Devils and the Damned, and the Blessedness of the Justified. Written for the Conviction of Sadducees and Infidels.' [r] This treatise appeared in a 12mo volume, in the year 1691, only a few months before the author's death. The subject, however, had long occupied his attention; for his 'Saint's Rest,' written forty years before, contains some things of the same nature. And, indeed, several of his works contain discussions of this kind. It is necessary, however, to hear the author's own account of the origin and design of this publication.

[q] On the Nature of Spirits, pp. 8, 9.

[r] This singular book was translated into German, and published at Nuremberg, in 1731. Several of the stories contained in it came from Germany, so that they would get back to their native country, probably with some improvements.

"As to the original of this collection, it had its rise from my own, and other men's need. When God first awakened me to think, with preparing seriousness, of my condition after death, I had not any observed doubts of the reality of spirits, or the immortality of the soul, or of the truth of the Gospel; but all my doubts were about my own renovation and title to that blessed life. But when God had given me peace of conscience, Satan assaulted me with those worse temptations: yet, through God's grace, they never prevailed against my faith; nor did he ever raise in me the least doubt of the being and perfections of God; nor of my duty to love, honour, obey, and trust him; for I still saw that to be an Atheist was to be mad.

"But I found that my faith of supernatural revelation must be more than believing man, and that if it had not a firm foundation and rooting, even sure evidence of verity, surely apprehended, it was not like to do those great works that faith had to do, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to make my death to be safe and comfortable. Therefore, I found that all confirming helps were useful; and among those of the lower sort, apparitions, and other sensible manifestations of the certain existence of spirits of themselves invisible, were a means that might do much with such as are prone to judge by sense. The uses hereof, I mention before the book, that the reader may know that I write it for practice, and not to please men with the strangeness and novelty of useless stories.

"It is no small number of writers on such subjects that I have read, for near threescore years time from the first occasion; and finding that almost all the Atheists, Sadducees, and infidels, did seem to profess, that were they but sure of the reality of the apparitions and operations of spirits, it would cure them; I thought this the most suitable help for them that have sinned themselves into an incapacity of more rational and excellent arguments. And I have long feared, lest secret unobserved defectiveness in their belief of the immortality of the soul, and the truth of the Scripture, is the great cause of all men's other defects. There lieth usually the unsoundness of worldly hypocrites, where it is prevailing; and thence is the weakness of grace in the best, though it prevail not against their sincerity. By which motives I did, though it displeased some, make it the second part of my book, called, 'The Saint's Rest;' and, afterwards, provoked by Clement Writer, I did it much more fully in a book called 'The Unreasonableness of Infidelity.' After that, provoked by the copy of

a paper dispersed in Oxford, said to be Dr. Walker's, questioning the certainty of our religion, and seeing no answer to it come from the university men, I wrote yet more methodically of all, in a book called 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion.' I after added a small discourse, called 'More Reasons for it,' provoked by one that called himself Herbert, in which also I answered the Lord Herbert *De Veritate*. Since then, a nameless Sadducee hath drawn me to publish an answer to him; and in my 'Life of Faith,' and other books, I have handled the same subject. All which I tell the reader, that he may see why I have taken this subject as so necessary, why I am ending my life with the publication of these historical letters and collections, which I dare say have such evidence, as will leave every Sadducee that readeth them, either convinced or utterly without excuse." [s]

To enter on any investigation of the truth of the extraordinary stories of witchcraft, apparitions, and prodigies, contained in this book, would be foreign from the design of these memoirs. It is difficult to account for many of the narratives, as they were furnished by persons of respectability, on whose veracity, therefore, every dependence may be placed.[t] Many things can be explained by the supposition, that the parties were under the influence of diseased imaginations, and really believed that they saw the things of which they speak. In other cases gross imposition was without doubt practised; and a stricter scrutiny would have detected the imposture and knavery of the parties. Some of the prodigies may be accounted for from the operation of natural causes, many of which have now become familiar to us, and others that are still occult may yet be discovered. Much must be attributed to the credulity of the age. Hence it is the less surprising that Baxter was the subject of it, when we find such men labouring under it as Judge Hale, More, Robert Boyle, and many other eminent individuals. It is not long since the statute book of the country was freed from laws, the operation of which, with the superstition of all classes, brought many an innocent individual to a horrible death.[u]

[s] Preface.

[t] Without referring to the foreigners, whose accounts are introduced by Baxter in this volume, there are narratives furnished by many persons of eminence in our own country. Lord Broghill, the Duke of Lauderdale, the Rev. Thos. Emlyn, of Dublin, and Dr. Dan. Williams.

[u] Honourable mention ought to be made of John Webster, practitioner in physic, who, in 1677, when the doctrine of witchcraft was very generally

I am afraid that Baxter's object in compiling and authenticating these stories, the conviction of the Sadducees, has not been accomplished by them. It will commonly be found, I apprehend, that if men do not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe on the authority of "witches, hobgoblins, or chimeras dire." It is not from want of evidence that they do not believe, but from dislike to religion, which predisposes them to reject or to trifle with all evidence that the nature of the subject admits or requires.

Various causes may be assigned for the superstitious feelings, and the dread of supernatural beings, which generally belong to an unenlightened state of society. There seems naturally to exist in man, not only "a *longing* after immortality," but also a kind of dread of that world of spirits to which a part of his nature is allied. With this is combined a strong desire to know what belongs to that state, and its mysterious transactions. Certain passages of Scripture, misunderstood, have tended to nourish the idea, that, as in early times,

> "Descending spirits have convers'd with men,
> And told the secrets of the world unknown,"

such things may happen again. The Romish doctrine of purgatory, with the legends of the saints, have been fruitful sources of superstition, and have supplied a large portion of the material which has been wrought into the innumerable fictions that still continue afloat, and even yet too frequently constitute the terror of the nursery and the cottage. The appearance and advance of light, however, invariably operate on these superstitious fancies, like the fabled influence of the cock crowing or appearance of the morning, on the spirits of the deep. They cannot stir, or walk abroad, under the light of heaven.

I cannot take leave of this portion of the writings of Baxter, without remarking, what I believe has not been attended to, that he is the first original writer on the evidences of revealed religion in the English language. Before Herbert's time

believed, and most zealously contended for, published 'The Displaying of supposed Witchcraft,' in a *folio volume*, full of curious learning; in which he combats the erroneous opinions which then prevailed, and had been advocated by such men as Glanvil and Casaubon. Baxter published his work long after this of Webster appeared; it is rather surprising that he either knew it not, or if he was acquainted with it, that he took no notice of it.

the deistical controversy had not appeared in this country, and Baxter was the first to grapple with his lordship's argument. In 1604, a translation of a work by an illustrious French, Protestant, appeared with the following title, 'A Work concerning the trueness of Christian Religion, written in French against Atheists, Epicures, Paynims, Jews, Mahometists, and other infidels, by Philip Mornay, Lord of Plessie Marlie. Begun to be translated by Sir Philip Sydney, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding, 4to.' This is a work of very considerable merit. Of the treatise of Grotius 'De Veritate,' which had also been translated before, it is superfluous to speak; its merits are well known, and duly estimated.

Had the 'Atheomastix' of Bishop Fotherby, published in 1622, been completed, it would have enjoyed the precedence in this department which now properly belongs to Baxter. That learned writer proposed to treat of four subjects:—"That there is a God—That there is but one God—That Jehovah, our God, is that one God—And, that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God." His publication, however, embraces only the first two topics. These are discussed with considerable ability, and with a vast profusion of learning, which excite regret that the bishop was not spared to grapple with infidelity, after so ably demolishing Atheism.

Stillingfleet's 'Origines Sacræ,' first appeared in 1663, where the subject is treated with great learning and ability, and very elaborately. This distinguished performance is entitled to great praise. It contains a large portion of recondite learning; prosecutes the subject with great strength of argument; and exhibits "the grounds of the Christian faith, as to the truth and divine authority of the Scriptures," in a manner that can scarcely fail to produce conviction in the minds of honest inquirers. The works of Baxter on the evidences of religion, are neither so learned nor so systematically arranged, but they are more adapted to popular and general usefulness than is the production of Stillingfleet. They are written with more point, and contain a greater mixture of those views of Christianity which are necessary to be received as the great object of its testimony, and without which the discussion of its evidence is little calculated to profit. Neither Baxter nor Stillingfleet appears to have borrowed from the other; and each is excellent in his own way.

Since that time, a multitude of works on every branch of the

Christian evidence has been published. The diversified forms in which revelation has been attacked, have only occasioned a corresponding diversity of defence. If infidelity has racked its ingenuity to undermine or overthrow the citadel of God, talent not less powerful, and genius equally splendid, have been employed in successfully resisting the attempt. In argument, infidels have long since been driven from the field. They have been stripped of their armour; their sophistry and guile have been exposed; their malice detected, and their wit turned against themselves. If on the one side can be ranked a Hume and a Gibbon, a Voltaire and a Paine; on the other can be placed, Campbell, and Hales, Lardner, Watson, Paley, and Gregory, with a numerous host beside; in learning and talents equal to any of the adversaries of the faith, and in moral worth and weight of character not to be mentioned in connexion with such men. If their invaluable writings have in some measure superseded those of Baxter, it is not because they contain stronger arguments, or more ingenious reasonings, but because they are better adapted to the peculiar forms which infidelity has more recently assumed. While grateful for their labours, it is proper we should remember, that their predecessors did worthily in their time. They in fact cleared the ground, and laid the foundation of that noble structure which more modern architects have succeeded in rearing.[t]

[t] The latest work in this department of literature, which I have seen, is 'The Divine Origin of Christianity, deduced from some of those Evidences which are not founded on the Authority of Scripture.' By John Sheppard. 2 vols. 12mo. 1829. The author of this work is well known to the public by his beautiful little work on private devotion: the present, is of an entirely different character; but does no less credit to his talents, his learning, and his acuteness. He is quite a Baxter for his scrupulosity in weighing and balancing proofs; and much more judicious in his manner of urging them. The work is in some danger of repelling superficial readers; both the arrangement and the learning of it require more study than they who wish to arrive at the knowledge of all science and art by the shortest road, are generally disposed to give to any subject. But the lover of close argument, and satisfactory information, will be amply repaid by the studious examination of these volumes.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'Aphorisms of Justification'—Animadversions on the Aphorisms by Burgess, Warren, Wallis, Cartwright, and Lawson—Other Antagonists—'Apology'—Molinæus, Crandon, Eyres—'Confession of Faith'—'Perseverance'—Kendal—Barlow—Shepherd—'Saving Faith'—'Dissertations on Justification'—'On Justifying Righteousness'—Controversy with Tully—'Original Sin'—'Universal Redemption'—'Catholic Theology'—'Methodus Theologiæ'—'End of Doctrinal Controversies'—General View of Baxter's Doctrinal Sentiments—Strictures on his Manner of conducting Controversy—Conclusion.

THE doctrinal works of Baxter, which naturally follow his writings on the evidences of religion, with the controversies in which they involved him, occupied a large portion of his active and useful life. It will be expected, therefore, that a full account of this class of his writings, and of his peculiar theological sentiments, should be given in this chapter. Though I have not shrunk from labour, in endeavouring to accomplish the task which I have voluntarily undertaken, I frankly confess that this part of it has been more difficult than any other; and I fear it may not afford the reader all the satisfaction he anticipates or desires. The immense extent of Baxter's writing on disputable subjects; the peculiar character of his mind—subtle, acute, and versatile, in an extraordinary degree; the manner in which he was assailed by the men of all parties and of all creeds, which led to a great diversity of defence and attack on his part; his favourite scheme of union and reconciliation—involving a variety of concessions, and tempting him to avail himself of many refined and untangible distinctions, are some of the causes and sources of those difficulties which belong to the attempt to ascertain his precise sentiments, and correctly to represent the design of his voluminous productions.

Whatever view may be taken of his opinions on various subordinate subjects, it is certain that on all matters of essential and vital importance in the evangelical system, he held those truths which are most surely believed among all genuine Christians. He had, indeed, his own mode of explaining certain points, which a man who thought so much and so independently must have had. He was not formed to be an implicit believer in human creeds, or to follow in the steps of any uninspired master. On the other hand, he had no ambition to be the founder of a new school of theology; for, though his name has been prefixed to a class, that class has never constituted a separate party, but, in as far as it has existed, has been found among persons of various parties: few even of whom would probably have been acknowledged by Baxter himself as altogether of his mind, and still fewer of them, perhaps, would have acknowledged him as their apostle.

The time has been when it would have been dangerous to the reputed orthodoxy of an individual who should have professed great respect for the doctrinal views of Baxter. High Arminians on the one hand, and high Calvinists on the other, agreed to revile him. Baxterianism was a term of reproach, readily applied to many who were sounder in the faith than some of those who arrogated to themselves the exclusive appellation of orthodox. That time, however, has passed away. The character of Baxter has outlived all the reproaches fulminated against it, and we may now, without fear of dishonour, state his opinions, analyse his doctrines, and defend or advocate his cause where we believe it to be just. It is my business to give a faithful statement of matter of fact, "neither to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice," respecting our author; with whom I sometimes agree, and sometimes differ, on the topics discussed in this chapter.

In 1649, Baxter began his career of authorship by a small publication, entitled "Aphorisms of Justification." This work deserves attention, not so much on its own account, for he acknowledges it was written "in his immature youth, and the crudity of his new conceptions,"[u] as because it contains the germs of his leading sentiments, and was the occasion of the

[u] The copy of the Aphorisms used by me is one of the second edition, which was pretended to be printed at the Hague, 1655, but in reality was printed surreptitiously by a Cambridge bookseller. This copy contains many marginal notes, and alterations of the text, in the hand-writing of Mr. Baxter. Of

greater part of the doctrinal controversies in which he engaged. The professed object of it is, to explain the nature of justification, the covenants, satisfaction, righteousness, faith, works, &c. This he attempts in a series of eighty theses, or propositions, with their respective explanations. That he did not succeed to his own satisfaction, he freely acknowledges; and that it was still less satisfactory to others, appears from the numerous animadversions and defences which it occasioned. He blames himself for deficiency and incautiousness, and for meddling imprudently with Dr. Owen. "It was overmuch valued," he says, "by some, and overmuch blamed by others; both contrary to my own esteem of it. It cost me more than any other book that I have written; not only by men's offence, but especially by putting me on long and tedious writings. But it was a great help to my understanding, for the animadverters were of several minds, and what one approved another confuted, being further from each other than any of them were from me."

Among those who furnished him with strictures, some in manuscript, and some in print, were Mr. Anthony Burgess, to whom, and Richard Vines, it was dedicated. Mr. John Warren; Dr. John Wallis, one of the scribes to the Westminster Assembly, and well known for his mathematical talents; Mr. Christopher Cartwright, of York, a Presbyterian minister of considerable learning; and Mr. George Lawson, of whom Baxter gives rather a long description. But I must give his own account of these individuals, as it contains some things worthy of being recorded.

"The first that I craved animadversions from was Mr. Burgess, and with much ado, extorted only two or three letters against justification by works, as he called it; which, with my answers, were afterwards published; when he had proceeded to print against me what he would not give me in writing.

"The next and full animadversions which I received, were from Mr. John Warren, an honest, acute, ingenious man, to whom I answered in freer expressions than others, because he was my junior and familiar friend; being a school-boy at Bridgnorth when I was preacher there, and his father was my neighbour. Next to his, I had animadversions from Dr. John Wallis, very judicious and moderate, to which I began to write

these the expression quoted above is part. Many of these notes and alterations discover the progress of the writer's mind, and the amiable candour by which it was distinguished. At the head of one thesis, he says, "There is nothing in this section worth reading."

a reply, but broke it off in the middle, because he little differed from me.

"The next I had, was from Mr. Christopher Cartwright, of York, who defended the king against the Marquis of Worcester. He was a man of good reading, as to our later divines, and was very well versed in the common road; a very good Hebrician, and a very honest, worthy person. His animadversions were most against my distinction of righteousness into legal and evangelical, according to the two covenants. His answer was full of citations out of Amesius, Whittaker, Davenant, &c. I wrote him a full reply; and he wrote me a rejoinder; to which, my time not allowing me to write a full confutation, I took up all the points of difference between him and me, and handled them briefly, confirming my reasons for the ease of the reader and myself.

"The next animadverter was Mr. George Lawson, the ablest man of them all, or of almost any I know in England; especially by the advantage of his age, and very hard studies, and methodical head, but above all, by his great skill in politics, wherein he is most exact, which contributeth not a little to the understanding of divinity. He was himself near the Arminians, differing from them only in the point of perseverance as to the confirmed, and some little matters more; and though he went further than I did from the Antinomians, yet being conversant with men of another mind, to redeem himself from their offence, he set himself against some passages of mine, which others marvelled that he, of all men, should oppose; especially about the object of faith and justification. He afterwards published an excellent sum of divinity, called *Theopolitica;* in which he insisteth on these two points, to make good what he had said in his MS. against me.

"He hath written, also, animadversions on Hobbes, and a piece on ecclesiastical and civil policy, according to the method of politics; an excellent book, were it not that he seemeth to justify the king's death, and meddles too boldly with the political controversies of the times, though he was a Conformist. I have also seen some ingenious manuscripts of his for the taking of the engagement to be true to the Commonwealth, as established without a king and house of lords, his opinions being much for submitting to the present possessor, though a usurper; but I thought those papers easily answerable. His animadversions on my papers were large, in which he frequently took occasion to

be copious and distinct, in laying down his own judgment, which pleased me very well. I returned him a full answer, and received from him a large reply; instead of a rejoinder to which, I summed up our differences, and spoke to them briefly and distinctly, and not *verbatim* to the words of his book. I must thankfully acknowledge that I learned more from Mr. Lawson than from any divine that gave me animadversions, or that ever I conversed with. For, two or three passages in my first reply to him, he convinced me, were mistakes; and I found up and down in him those hints of truths which had a great deal of light in them, and were very apt for good improvement, especially his instigating me to the study of politics, in which he much lamented the ignorance of divines, did prove a singular benefit to me. I confess it owing to my own uncapableness that I have received no more good from others. But yet I must be so grateful as to confess that my understanding hath made a better improvement of Grotius 'De Satisfactione Christi,' and of Mr. Lawson's manuscripts, than of any thing else that ever I read. They convinced me how unfit we are to write about Christ's government, laws, and judgment, while we understand not the true nature of government and laws in general; and that he that is ignorant of politics, and of the law of nature, will be ignorant and erroneous in divinity and the sacred Scriptures." [x]

Thus did Baxter, at a very early period of his life, launch into the ocean of controversy, on some of the most interesting subjects that can engage the human mind. The manner in which he began to treat them was little favourable to arriving at correct and satisfactory conclusions; but the persons whom he engaged to discuss them with him, were all men of respectable powers in theological argument, from whose letters or publi cations he derived considerable profit.

To give a concise and accurate opinion of these Aphorisms, is no easy task. This difficulty arises from the great number of separate propositions, which are neither always consistent with truth nor with one another. As a book, it abounds in moral and metaphysical distinctions, and yet its definitions are frequently both inaccurate and obscure. It contains a large portion of truth, mixed and interwoven with no small portion of error. When he thus expresses himself about our participation of Christ's righteousness, every true Christian is prepared to go along with him: "That God, the Father, doth accept the

[x] Life, part i. pp. 107, 108.

sufferings and mediation of his Son, as a full satisfaction to his violated law, and as a valuable consideration, upon which he will wholly forgive and acquit the offenders themselves, receive them again into favour, and give them the addition also of a more excellent happiness, so they will but receive his Son upon the terms expressed in the Gospel." But when he comes to explain "the terms of the Gospel," and the manner in which men submit to them, we meet with much that is incautious. To a good deal of the objectionable language of his theses, he indeed gives a harmless interpretation in the accompanying explanation, or in some subsequent proposition renders it entirely nugatory. But still there remains much which is calculated to mislead. He speaks about the Gospel being "a new law, the conditions of which are easier than those of the old;" of "faith as the righteousness of a Christian." He defines this faith as "the condition of the new covenant," and includes in it the whole of religion. He represents the death of Christ as not "affecting any sins against the Gospel;" speaks of "works" as "part of the condition on which Christ's righteousness becomes ours," and maintains that "we are justified by sincere obedience." To this language, no man who understands aright the gratuitous justification which is through faith in the blood of Christ, will ever subscribe.

These were some of the expressions or sentiments which involved Baxter in most of the doctrinal altercations that occupied so large a portion of his future life, and on account of which his name has been placed at the head of a peculiar creed. While he explained, modified, and retracted, many things in this first, and perhaps most objectionable of his works, he adhered to the substance of its sentiments to the last.[7]

Along with those sentiments, which most persons of evangelical views agree to be incorrect, he has introduced some others

[7] It is to be regretted that the incorrect language of Baxter, on some of the above topics, is by no means peculiar to him. Even Dr. Doddridge, whose evangelical sentiments are so well known, is very injudicious sometimes in his definitions. Thus, in his lectures, where we should suppose great accuracy would be studied, he says, "Christ has made *satisfaction* for the sins of all those who repent of their sins, and return to God in the way *of sincere though imperfect obedience*." p. 418. "Faith in Christ is a very extensive principle, and includes, *in its nature*, and inseparable effects, *the whole of moral virtue*." p. 424. 2d Edit. This mode of speaking of the way of acceptance, is as objectionable as any thing I have met with in Baxter. In other places, however, both Baxter and Doddridge show that they were more consistent with the truth, though not consistent with themselves.

on which various opinions have been entertained. He denies the distinction, or rather the use that has been made of it, between the active and passive righteousness of Christ; the latter as the Christian's title to forgiveness, and the former to life. He contends, if I understand him aright, that the sufferings of the Redeemer include the whole of his earthly undertaking, terminated by his death, and that these furnish at once the ground of acceptance, and the channel of heavenly and eternal life. On the nature and extent of the death, threatened on account of the Adamic transgression, also, he held views not generally entertained: "That man should live here for a season a dying life, separated from God, devoid of his image, subject to bodily curses and calamities, dead in law, and at last his soul and body be separated; his body turning to dust from whence it came, and his soul enduring everlasting sorrow, yet nothing so great, as those that are threatened in the new covenant." These things, however, he mentions in the preface, that he does not very confidently insist on.[z]

In the appendix to this small work, he makes an acknowledgment which explains the reason of the perplexities that occur in this and some other of his controversial writings. "To tell the truth, while I busily read what other men said in these controversies, my mind was so prepossessed with their notions, that I could not possibly see the truth in its own native and naked evidence, and when I entered into public disputations concerning it, though I was truly willing to know the truth, my mind was so forestalled with borrowed notions, that I chiefly studied how to make good the opinions which I

[z] The extent of the Adamic curse has occasioned a good deal of discussion. The majority, I believe, of Calvinistic writers contend that it includes death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.—Vide *Calvini Inst.* lib. ii. c. 3. *Westminster Conf.* chap. vi. Dr. Doddridge objects to this view of it, without intimating what his own was.—*Lectures*, pp. 415, 416, 2d Edit. Bishop Law maintained that it meant an entire destruction, rather than a perpetual punishment—an annihilation of the soul, and a resolution of the body into its original dust. *Theory of Relig.* pp. 339—351. 7th Edit. I suppose Bishop Bull was of the same opinion with Law.—See *Life, by Nelson*, pp. 89, 197, 198, 225. Joseph Hallet also seems to have been nearly of this opinion.—*Notes and Observations*, vol. i. pp. 313—326. Mr. Archibald M'Lean, of Edinburgh, in his tract on original sin, endeavours to establish that the curse extended no further than to natural death, or the dissolution of soul and body. That a resurrection was not provided by the Adamic constitution, and belongs entirely to the redemption of Christ, seems to be plainly intimated in the New Testament.—1 Cor. xv. 21—23; Rom. v. 12—21. Dr. Watts had some views of this subject peculiar to himself.—See his *Ruin and Recovery*, pp. 324—347. Dr. Ridgley also had an hypothesis of his own.—See *Body of Divinity*, p. 11.

had received, and ran farther from the truth. Yea, when I read the truth in Dr. Preston's and other men's writings, I did not consider and understand it; and when I heard it from them whom I opposed in wrangling disputations, or read it in books of controversy, I discerned it least of all. Till at last, being in my sickness cast far from home, *where I had no book but my Bible, I set to study the truth from thence, and so, by the blessing of God, discovered more in one week, than I had done before in seventeen years' reading, hearing, and wrangling.*" This is a most important testimony. It shows us that we must look for Baxter's doctrinal views to his practical rather than to his controversial writings. It is much easier to applaud the fine sentiment of Chillingworth, that "the Bible,—the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," than it is fully to adopt it, and to bring all our sentiments and thoughts under subjection to it. Yet it is infinitely pleasanter and more satisfactory to appeal at once to "the law and the testimony," than to be bandied from author to author, or doomed to explore and reconcile the endless contradictions and jarrings of human authority.[a]

At the end of his work on Infant Baptism, published in 1650, the year after his Aphorisms, Baxter requested the animadversions of his brethren on them, and was soon furnished with their remarks to the full extent of his desires. Beside those already referred to as noticing this book, Mr. Blake, of Tamworth, made some exceptions to it in a work on the Covenants, which was published soon after. Kendall, in his defence of the doctrine of perseverance against John Goodwin, added an appendix of animadversions on Baxter. William Eyre, of Salisbury, attacked him in a book on Justification, ushered into the world with a preface by Dr. Owen. But the most extended work in reply to him was by John Crandon, minister at Fawley, in Hampshire, under the affected title of "Baxter's Aphorisms exorized and anthorized," a huge quarto of 700 pages, with a prefatory letter by Caryl.

Baxter, nothing daunted by the appearance and front of so many adversaries, produced, in 1654, what he calls his 'APOLOGY,' containing his 'reasons of dissent from Mr. Blake's ex-

[a] For an account of the part which Owen took in this controversy, see 'Memoirs of Owen,' pp. 119—122. Beside the persons mentioned in the text, who wrote against the Aphorisms, and of whom Mr. Baxter himself takes notice, John Tombes, the Baptist, wrote 'Animadversiones Quædam in Aphorismos, Richardi Baxter, de Justificatione,' 1658.

ceptions;' 'The Reduction of a Digressor,' in reply to Kendall; an 'Admonition to Mr. William Eyre;' and 'Crandon Anatomized; or, a Nosegay of the choicest Flowers in that Garden presented to Joseph Caryl.' Not satisfied with repelling his antagonists in this volume, he goes out of the way to produce a 'Confutation of a Dissertation for the Justification of Infidels,' by Ludiomæus Colvinus, alias Ludovicus Molinæus, professor of history, in Oxford.

The following notices of several of these opponents are furnished by Baxter, and will perhaps amuse the reader.

"As for Ludiomæus Colvinus, it is Ludovicus Molinæus, a doctor of physic, son to Peter Molinæus, and public professor of history in Oxford. He wrote a small Latin treatise against his own brother, Cyrus Molinæus, to prove that justification is before faith. I thought I might be bold to confute him who chose the truth and his own brother to oppose. Another small assault the same author made against me (instead of a reply), for approving of Cameron's and Amiraldus's way about universal redemption and grace, to which I answered in the preface to the book; but these things were so far from alienating the esteem and affection of the doctor, that he is now at this day, one of those friends who are injurious to the honour of their own understandings, by overvaluing me; and would fain have spent his time in translating some of my books into the French tongue.

"Mr. Crandon was a man that had run from Arminianism, into the extreme of half-antinomianism; and having an excessive zeal for his opinions (which seem to be honoured by the extolling of free grace), and withal being an utter stranger to me, he got a deep conceit that I was a Papist, and in that persuasion, wrote a large book against my Aphorisms, which moved laughter in many, and pity in others, and troubled his friends, as having disadvantaged their cause. As soon as the book came abroad, the news of the author's death came with it, who died a fortnight after its birth. I had beforehand got all, save the beginning and end out of the press, and wrote so much for an answer as I thought it worthy, before the publication of it.

"Mr. Eyre was a preacher in Salisbury, of Mr. Crandon's opinion, who having preached there for justification before faith, that is, the justification of elect infidels, was publicly confuted by Mr. Warren, and Mr. Woodbridge, a very judicious minister of Newbury, who had lived in New England. Mr.

Woodbridge printed his sermon, which very perspicuously opened the doctrine of justification, after the method that I had done. Mr. Eyre, being offended with me as a partner, gave me some part of his opposition, to whom I returned an answer in the end; and a few words to Mr. Caryl, who licensed and approved Mr. Crandon's book, for the Antinominians were commonly Independents. No one of all the parties replied to this book, save only Mr. Blake, to some part of that which touched him."[b]

The Apology containing so many parts, is a thick quarto, full of that subtle and acute reasoning for which its author was eminently distinguished. The main point in the controversy, the subject of justification, is often lost sight of in the strife of words, and the multifarious discussions perpetually occurring. He generally treats his adversaries respectfully, with the exception of Crandon, who had assailed him with intolerable insolence and abuse. He prefixed to the volume, an admirable dedication to his old friend and companion in the army, "the Honourable Commissary-General Whalley." As it is not my intention to dwell in detail on the contents of this volume, I shall extract a passage from the dedication, where the author defends his engaging in controversy by an ingenious reference to the wars in which Whalley and himself had reluctantly engaged, and concludes with a beautiful address to the veteran soldier.

"The work of these papers has been, to my mind, somewhat like those sad employments wherein I attended you: of themselves, grievous and ungrateful; exasperating others, and not pleasing ourselves. The remembrance of those years is so little delightful to me, that I look back upon them as the saddest part of my life; so the review of this apology is but the renewing of my trouble; to think of our common frailty and darkness, and what reverend and much-valued brethren I contradict; but, especially, the fear lest men should make this collision an occasion of derision, and, by receiving the sparks into combustible affections, should turn that to a conflagration, which I intended but for an illumination. If you say, I should then have let it alone, the same answer must serve as, in the former case, we were wont to use. Some say, that I, who pretend so much for peace, should not write of controversies. For myself, it is not much matter; but must God's truth stand as a butt for every man to shoot at? Must there be such liberty of opposing it, and none

[b] Life, part i. pp. 110, 111,

of defending? One party cannot have peace without the other's consent. To be buffeted and assaulted, and commanded to deliver up the truth of God, and called unpeaceable, if I defend it and resist, this is such equity as we were wont to find. In a word, both works were ungrateful to me, and are so in the review; but in both, as Providence and men's onset imposed a necessity, and drove me to that strait, that I must defend or do worse, so did the same Providence clear my way, and draw me on, and sweeten unusual troubles with unusual mercies, and issue all in testimonies of grace, that as I had great mixtures of comfort with sorrow in the performance, so have I in the review; and as I had more eminent deliverances, and other mercies, in those years and ways of blood and dolor, than in most of my life besides, so have I had more encouraging light since I was engaged in those controversies. For I speak not of these few papers only, but of many more of the like nature that have taken up my time; and as I still retained a hope that the end of all our calamities, and strange disposings of Providence, would be somewhat better than was threatened of late, so experience hath taught me to think that the issue of my most ungrateful labours shall not be in vain; but that Providence which extracted them, hath some use to make of them better than I am yet aware of; if not in this age, yet in times to come. The best is, we now draw no blood: and honest hearts will not feel themselves wounded with that blow which is only given to their errors. However, God must be served when he calls for it, though by the harshest and most unpleasing work. Only, the Lord teach us to watch carefully over our deceitful hearts, lest we should serve ourselves while we think and say we are serving him; and lest we should militate for our own honour and interest, when we pretend to do it for his truth and glory!

"I hope, sir, the diversity of opinions in these days will not diminish your estimation of Christianity, nor make you suspect that all is doubtful, because so much is doubted of. Though the tempter seems to be playing such a game in the world, God will go beyond him, and turn that to illustration and confirmation which he intended for confusion and extirpation of the truth. You know it is no news to hear of men, ignorant, proud, and licentious, of what religion soever they be: this trinity is the creator of heresies. As for the sober and godly, it is but in lesser things that they disagree; and mostly about words and methods, more than matter, though the smallest things of God

are not contemptible. He that wonders to see wise men differ, doth but wonder that they are yet imperfect, and know but in part; that is, that they are yet mortal sinners, and not glorified on earth! Such wonderers know not what man is, and are too great strangers to themselves. If they turn these differences to the prejudice of God's truth or dishonour of godliness, they show themselves yet more unreasonable than those who blame the sun, that men are purblind; and, indeed, were pride and passion laid aside in our disputes, if men could gently suffer contradiction, and heartily love and correspond with those that in lower matters do gainsay them, I see not but such friendly debates might edify.

"For yourself, sir, as you were a friend to sound doctrine, to unity, and to piety, and to the preachers, defenders, and practisers thereof, while I conversed with you, and, as fame informeth us, have continued such, so I hope that God, who hath so long preserved you, will preserve you to the end; and he that hath been your shield in corporal dangers will be so in spiritual.

"Your great warfare is not yet accomplished: the worms of corruption that breed in us will live, in some measure, till we die ourselves. Your conquest of yourself is yet imperfect. To fight with yourself you will find the hardest, but most necessary conflict that ever yet you were engaged in; and to overcome yourself, the most honourable and gainful victory. Think not that your greatest trials are all over. Prosperity hath its peculiar temptations, by which it hath foiled many that stood unshaken in the storms of adversity. The tempter, who hath had you on the waves, will now assault you in the calm, and hath his last game to play on the mountain, till nature cause you to descend. Stand this charge, and you win the day." [b]

Whalley, to whom these faithful admonitions were addressed, was one of the most active of the republican officers in the parliamentary army. He was one of the king's judges, and took a leading part in procuring the resignation of Richard Cromwell. He left England with his son-in-law, Gough, for America, a few days before the Restoration. Landing at Boston they waited on Governor Endicott, and told him who they were. They then took up their residence in that neighbourhood, till a hue and cry followed them from Barbadoes. Then they removed to Newhaven, where they owed their preservation to John Davenport, the minister of the place; who had the courage to preach to the

[b] Dedication.

people, when their pursuers arrived, from Isaiah xvi. 3, 4. Though large rewards were offered for them, and Davenport threatened, as it was known he had harboured them, they were still concealed. Their hiding place was a cave on the top of a rock, a few miles from the town: Here they lurked two or three years, when they moved to Hadley, where they were concealed by Russel, the minister, fifteen or sixteen years. During their residence in this place, a singular opportunity was afforded one of the fugitives to render momentous assistance to his preservers. During a long war between the English settlers and the Indian chief of Pokanoket, the Indians surprised Hadley in the time of public worship. The men of the town, though in the habit of taking arms with them when they attended divine service, were panic-struck and confounded; and, in all probability, not a soul of them would have been saved, had not an old and venerable man, whose dress was different from the inhabitants, and whom no one had seen before, suddenly appeared among them. He rallied them, put himself at their head, gave his orders like one accustomed to battle, led them on, routed the enemy, and, when the victory was complete, was no longer to be found. This deliverer, whom the people believed to be an angel, was General Gough! Whalley died at Hadley in 1688, and Gough some time after. The history is not without interest; and the reader will not suppose it is made to do honour to the regicides, when he is informed that the statement is taken from the Quarterly Review.[c] Considering the opinion entertained of Whalley by Baxter, and the latter part of his history, there is reason to regard him as another of those men who, "in evil times," devoted themselves to the interests of their country, and whose principles and character (though every part of their conduct is not to be vindicated) have long been most infamously misrepresented.

To return to Baxter. Finding that his Apology had not answered the end for which it was made—the satisfaction of his opponents—in 1655 he published his 'Confession of Faith, especially concerning the interest of repentance, and sincere obedience to Christ, in our justification and salvation.' 4to. The object of the confession, he tells us in his own life, was "to save any more misunderstanding of his Aphorisms, and to declare

[c] 'Quarterly Review' for November, 1809. vol. ii. p. 32. The story is told by Holmes in his 'Annals of America.'

his suspension of them till he should reprint them;" which he never did. "In my Confession," he says, "I opened the whole doctrine of Antinomianism, and brought the testimonies of abundance of our divines, who gave as much to other works, beside faith, in justification, as I did."

This remark places before us one peculiarity in Baxter's system. He regarded faith not merely as the *sine qua non* of a sinner's justification, but as what was imputed for righteousness; and included in this faith what he considered sincere obedience to Christ as a Lord or Lawgiver. Yet he had his own way of explaining this phraseology consistently with his strong and repeated declaration that "faith itself doth not merit our pardon or justification, nor justify us as a work, nor as faith;" that "no works of the regenerate, internal or external, are to join with Christ's sufferings and merits, as any part of satisfaction to God's justice for our sins; no, not the least part for the least sin;" and that "neither faith, love, repentance, nor any works of ours, are true, efficient causes of our remission or justification, either principal or instrumental." He declares in the most solemn manner, "I do heartily approve of the shorter catechism of the Assembly, and of all therein contained: and I take it for the best catechism I ever yet saw." "I have perused," he says, "all the articles of the Synod of Dort, and unfeignedly honour them, as containing sound and moderate doctrine; and there is nothing that I have observed in it all, that my judgment doth contradict, if I be allowed these few expositions." These expositions do not affect any of the leading points. He says: "In the very article of perseverance, which some are pleased to quarrel with me about, I subscribe to the Synod;" "yea," he adds, "in the article of the extent of redemption, wherein I am most suspected and accused, I do subscribe to the Synod of Dort, *without any exception, limitation, or exposition, of any word, as doubtful and obscure.*"

As every man ought to be allowed to be the expositor of his own sentiments, let no man after this, question or deny the Calvinism of Richard Baxter. He was as much a Calvinist as thousands who then, or who now, bear the name without suspicion. He indeed used language liable to be misunderstood, as do all who are disposed to be too refined or metaphysical on moral subjects. His very efforts at precision in the use of words and phrases, involved him in controversy, which, by a more general mode of speaking, he would have avoided. He was open and

honest; what other men swallowed in a mass, he divided, analysed, and explained, often to a troublesome extent. Yet his very scrupulosity in holding and explaining his sentiments, compels us to respect him: while his supreme regard for the honour of God, the holiness of his government, and the claims of his law, entitles him to our highest approbation. The man who could write the following passage, cannot be regarded as holding either narrow or obscure views of the divine moral government; or of the system of redemption which that moral government embraces and develops.

"As is the moon with the stars unto the expanded firmament; as are the well-ordered cities with their ornaments and fortifications to the woods and wilderness, such is the church to the rest of the world. The felicity of the church is in the love of God, and its blessed influence, whose face is that sun which doth enlighten and enliven it. If earth and sin had not caused a separation and eclipse, the world and the church would have been the same, and this church would have enjoyed an uninterrupted day-light. It is the earth that moveth and turneth from this sun, and not the sun's receding from the earth, that brings our night. It is not God, but man, that lost his goodness; nor is it necessary to our reparation, that a change be made on him, but on us. Christ came not into the world to make God better, but to make us better; nor did he die to make him more disposed to do good, but to dispose us to receive it. His purpose was not actually to change the mind of God, nor to incline him to have mercy who before was disinclined, but to make the pardon of man's sin a thing convenient for the righteous and holy Governor of the world to bestow, without any impeachment of the honour of his wisdom, holiness, or justice; yea, to the more eminent glorifying of them all.

"Two things are requisite to make man amiable in the eyes of God, and a fit object for the Most Holy to take pleasure in: one is, his suitableness to the holiness of God's nature; the other respecteth his governing justice. We must, in this life, see God in the glass of the creature, and especially in man that beareth his image. Were we holy, he would love us as a holy God: and were we innocent, he would encourage us as a righteous and bounteous Governor. But as there is no particular governing justice, without that universal natural justice which it pre-supposeth and floweth from, so can there be no such thing as innocency in us as subjects, which floweth not from a holiness of our natures

as men. We must be good, before we can live as the good. In both these respects, man was amiable in the eyes of his Maker, till sin depraved him, and deprived him of both. To both these must the Saviour again restore him: and this is the work that he came into the world to do, even to seek and to save that which was doubly lost, and to destroy that twofold work of the devil, who hath drawn us to be both unholy and guilty.

"As in the fall, the natural real evil was antecedent to the relative guilt; so is it in the good conferred in the reparation. We must, in order of nature, be first turned by repentance unto God, through faith in the Redeemer, and then receive the remission of our sins. As it was man himself that was the subject of that twofold unrighteousness, so it is man himself that must be restored to that twofold righteousness which he lost, that is, sanctity, and not-guiltiness. Christ came not to possess God with any false opinion of us, nor is he such a physician as to perform but a supposed or reputative cure: he came not to persuade his Father to judge us to be well, because He is well; or to leave us uncured, and to persuade God that we are cured. It is we that were guilty and unholy; it is we that must be justified or condemned, and therefore it is we that must be restored unto righteousness. If Christ only were righteous, Christ only would be reputed and judged righteous, and Christ only would be happy. The Judge of the world will not justify the unrighteous, merely because another is righteous, nor can the holy God take complacency in an unholy sinner, because another is holy. Never did the blessed Son of God intend, in his dying or merits, to change the holy nature of his Father, and to cause him to love that which is not lovely, or to reconcile him to that which he abhorreth, as he is God. We must bear his own image, and be holy as he is holy, before he can approve us, or love us in complacency. This is the work of our blessed Redeemer, to make man fit for God's approbation and delight. Though we are the subjects, he is the cause. He regenerateth us, that he may pardon us; and he pardoneth us that he may further sanctify us, and make us fit for our Master's use. He will not remove our guilt till we return, nor will he accept our actual services till our guilt be removed. By supernatural operations must both be accomplished: a regress from such a privation as was our unholiness, requireth a supernatural work upon us, and a deliverance from such guilt and deserved punishment, requireth a supernatural operation for us. The one Christ effect-

eth in us by his sanctifying Spirit, through the instrumentality of his word, as informing and exciting; the other he effecteth by his own (and his Father's) will, through the instrumentality of his Gospel grant, by way of donation, making an universal conditional deed of gift of himself, and remission and right to glory, to all that return by repentance and faith. His blood is the meritorious cause of both, but not of both on the same account; for directly it was guilt only that made his blood necessary for our recovery. Had there been nothing to do but renew us by repentance and sanctification, this might have been done without any bloodshed, by the work of the word and Spirit. God at first gave man his image freely, and did not sell it for a price of blood; nor doth he so delight in blood, as to desire it, or accept it for itself, but for the ends which it must, as a convenient means, attain. Those ends are the demonstration proximately of his governing justice, in the vindication of the honour of his law and rule, and for the wrong of others: ultimately and principally, it is the demonstration of his natural sin-hating holiness, and his unspeakable love to the sons of men, but specially to his elect. In this sense was Christ a sacrifice and ransom, and may be truly said to have satisfied for our sins. He was not a sinner, nor so esteemed, nor could possibly take upon himself the numerical guilt, which lay on us, nor yet a guilt of the same sort, as having not the same sort of foundation or efficient; ours arising from the merit of our sin and the commination of the law; his being rather occasioned than merited by our sin, and occasioned by the laws threatening of us. He had neither sin of his own, nor merit of wrath from such sin, nor did the law oblige him to suffer for our sins; but he obliged himself to suffer for our sins, though not as in our persons strictly, yet in our stead in the person of a Mediator."[d]

This extract is not less worthy of attention for the beauty and felicity of some of its language, than for the accuracy of the thoughts and sentiments it contains. Being divested of every thing controversial, it presents before us, in a plain, inartificial manner, the writer's views of the damage man sustained at the fall, and of the nature of the salvation provided in the Gospel. As conveying the real opinions of Baxter, it is worth ten thousand pages of his controversial writing; it demolishes the whole system of Antinomianism.

[d] 'Confession of Faith,' Preface.

Some passages, on the subject of perseverance, in his treatise on 'The Right Method of Peace of Conscience,' having been misunderstood, he left them out of a second impression of that book; but, to prevent any misunderstanding that might arise from this, he published a quarto pamphlet, in 1657, entitled 'Richard Baxter's Account of his Present Thoughts concerning the Controversies about the Perseverance of the Saints.' It contains, chiefly, a statement of the great variety of opinions which prevail, according to Baxter, about the last of the five points. He enumerates twelve several modes of holding this doctrine, and gives his own views in the shape of objection to, or approbation of, each of these modes. This method of stating his sentiments is sufficiently tiresome and unsatisfactory. He professes not to have attained to certainty in understanding this point, with all the Scriptures that concern it, better than Augustine, and the common judgment of the church for so many ages; and, therefore, he dares not say that he has attained to certainty that all the justified shall persevere. On the other hand, he is not disposed to maintain the opposite opinion; but he endeavours to show that the certainty of the final perseverance of all who have been justified is not so necessary to comfort, much less to salvation, as many suppose. What his own opinions, stripped of all controversial and metaphysical distinctions, were, seem plainly expressed in the following passage: "Therefore, notwithstanding all the objections that are against it, and the ill use that will be made of it by many, and the accidental troubles into which it may cast some believers, it seems to me that the doctrine of perseverance is grounded on the Scriptures, and therefore is to be maintained, not only as extending to all the elect, against the Lutherans and Arminians, but also as extending to all the truly sanctified, against Augustine, and the Jansenians, and other Dominicans; though we must rank it but among truths of its own order, and not lay the church's peace or communion upon it."

This statement will, I apprehend, satisfy the most fastidious reader of the substantial orthodoxy of Baxter on this point. Had he said less about the opinions of others, in his controversial writings, and given us his own in fewer words than he commonly employs, I apprehend he would have been found a more consistent and thorough Calvinist than has generally been supposed. The grand controversy on the subject of perseverance, about the period when Baxter wrote his pamphlet, was carried

on between Dr. Owen and John Goodwin. Kendal replied to Goodwin in defence of Owen, and by the way offered some remarks on Baxter's sentiments respecting justification and perseverance.

"Dr. Kendal," says Baxter, "was a little quick-spirited man, of great ostentation, and a considerable orator and scholar. He was driven on further by others than his own inclination would have led him. He thought to get an advantage for his reputation, by a triumph over John Goodwin and me: for those who set him to work, would needs have him conjoin us both together, to intimate that I was an Arminian. While I was replying to his first assault, he wrote a second; and when I had begun a reply to that, meeting me at London, he was so earnest to take up the controversy, engaging Mr. Vines to persuade me that Bishop Usher might determine it, and I was so willing to be eased of such work, that I quickly yielded to Usher's arbitration. He owned my judgment about universal redemption, perseverance, &c.; but directed us to write against each other no more. And so my second reply was suppressed."[e]

Baxter's 'Confession of Faith,' proving little more satisfactory than his 'Apology,' and various animadversions having been made on it, he published in 1658 his 'Four Disputations of Justification,' 4to. pp. 423, with a view to meet some of the exceptions of his "learned and reverend brethren." The chief of those whom he notices, was Mr. Blake,[f] who died sometime before Baxter's work appeared; Mr. Anthony Burgess,[g] whom he had drawn by correspondence into a discussion with him on the nature of faith and of imputed righteousness; Mr. John Warner,[h] against whose "confident but dark assaults" he defends

[e] Life, part i. p. 110.

[f] The work of Blake, to which Baxter refers, is a 'Postscript,' addressed to Baxter, at the end of his book 'The Covenant Sealed,' which was published in 1655. It is written in a very kind and gentlemanly manner; though it exposes, somewhat strongly, several of Baxter's mistakes and unprofitable distinctions.

[g] The work of Burgess, on which Baxter animadverts, is 'The True Doctrine of Justification asserted,' 4to. 1654. The author was a man of considerable talents and learning. He was a member of the Westminster Assembly, and the author of several considerable works. He was ejected from Sutton Coldfield, in Warwickshire.

[h] Warner's book, to which Baxter replies, is the following, 'Diatriba Fidei Justificantis, &c.' or a Discourse of the object and office of faith as justifying, distinct from other objects and acts and offices of the same faith as sanctifying. 8vo. 1657. It is a scholastic and metaphysical work of some ability. The views of the author on the subject of which he treats are

himself; and Mr. John Tombes, with whom he fought the famous battle of Bewdley.[1] All these writers receive that measure of attention which he deemed due to their respective merits; and though he treats some of them rather sharply, he spoke of them all with great kindness and respect. The discussion is carried on in a very elaborate and scholastic style. The differences between himself and his brethren often turn on mere verbal quibbles; though in a few instances the distinctions for which Baxter contended, are of some importance to a clear statement of the important doctrine under consideration.

In consequence of some remarks on the subject of faith, in his 'Saint's Rest,' at the end of Serjeant Shepherd's work on 'Sincerity and Hypocrisy,' Baxter is animadverted on, and his views of that subject controverted. This led him to publish, in 1658, a 'Treatise on Saving Faith,' in which his object is to show that he had been misunderstood, and that he had always maintained that "saving faith is not only gradually, but specifically distinct from all common faith." Some sentiments in the work to which he replies, are of a very dangerous nature, and precisely similar to opinions which have been promulgated with great confidence in our own times: such as, that saving faith "is built not on the revealed testimony of God, but upon his immediate revelation and testimony:" by which it is resolved into impulse and feeling, or mere inward persuasion, instead of resting on the broad ground of God's own declaration in his word. Also that "regenerate men believe that Christ hath already satisfied for their sins, so as the debt is paid, and they freed; that he hath reconciled the Father to them; that their sins are pardoned, or they justified; that they are the sons of God here, and shall be the sons of God hereafter." Baxter combats these mistaken views with great success, although some of his own positions are not defensible. It is truly marvellous that the subject of faith, which the Scriptures treat with so much simplicity, should have led to such interminable and distracting debates. If saving faith be something else than the

both sound and well stated. They are much more satisfactory than what Baxter would have substituted in their place, and contain nothing of confidence or dark assaults that I can see. The author was bred at Oxford, but became pastor of the church of Christ at Christ's-church, Hampshire, where he was when this treatise was written.

[1] The book of Tombes, to which Baxter replies, is the Latin animadversions on his Aphorisms, referred to in the note to a former page. Anthony Wood says, "They were published by the said Baxter, without the author's knowledge, in 1658."—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iv. p. 1066.

belief of what God has revealed respecting the character and work of his Son, then is the whole affair of salvation an inexplicable riddle, which every man may interpret as best suits his fancy or his disposition.

Serjeant Shepherd was not the author of the observations which called forth the reply of Baxter. His "learned, consenting adversary," as he calls him, was Dr. Thomas Barlow, then provost of Queen's College, Oxford, and afterwards bishop of Lincoln. He was an able man—a decided Calvinist in his sentiments—evidently leaning rather to the ultra than to the moderate side of the doctrine.

Shepherd, to whose work his anonymous remarks were appended, was made serjeant-at-law and one of the Welsh judges, by Cromwell. He was a considerable man as a lawyer, but, as was no uncommon case at the period, he distinguished himself also as a divine. He wrote on law and theology. The discussion on both sides was maintained very courteously. Baxter contends there was no real difference between them; and subscribes the prefatory letter addressed to him, "A great esteemer of your piety and many labours."

Though published many years after this, yet as a part of the volume was written about this period of Baxter's life, and relates to the discussions in which his Aphorisms engaged him, it may here be most convenient to notice his 'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' in two books. It appeared in 8vo in 1676, and was occasioned by Dr. Tully's attack on him in his '*Justificatio Paulina.*' Beside his answer to Tully, it contains Cartwright's Exceptions to his Apology, which had been sent him at the time, but lost by Baxter. Having recovered the Exceptions, he published them at length, with his own answer in full. There is also, an Answer to Dr. Tully's angry letter.

The first dissertation in this volume, on the imputation of Christ's righteousness, was written in 1672, but it was not printed till 1675. Baxter explains the sense in which he conceives the doctrine to be understood by sound Protestants, and vindicates his own views against some objections of Dr. Tully. He professes his own belief in the definition of the subject given in the several Protestant confessions, though he explains some of the phrases employed by them in his own way.

Christopher Cartwright, whose Exceptions are contained in this volume, was a highly respectable minister of York; and is

still advantageously known as the author of some learned, rabbinical works. He animadverted on Baxter's Aphorisms, particularly on his distinction of legal and evangelical righteousness. Baxter replied to this in writing. Cartwright furnished the exceptions now published, which Baxter accompanies with a short answer.

The reference to Dr. Tully induces me to introduce at present, also, another small doctrinal performance—'Two Disputations of Original Sin,' pp. 245, 12mo. It appeared in 1675 at "the request of Dr. Tully," but the first part of it had been written long before. This was one of those subjects of discussion which the ministers about Kidderminster were accustomed to agitate at those presbyterial meetings in which Baxter always acted as moderator.

It appears that Baxter had been suspected by some of entertaining erroneous views on this important subject; by one class, being considered as believing too little, and by another, too much. To vindicate himself from all injurious imputations, therefore, he published these dissertations.

Dr. Thomas Tully, Baxter's opponent on several occasions, was a respectable clergyman of Calvinistic sentiments. In the time of the Commonwealth he had been principal of Edmund Hall, Oxford. He was, after the Restoration, made a royal chaplain, and beside other things, appointed to the deanery of Ripon, in Yorkshire. In his treatise above referred to, he defends Paul's doctrine of justification without works against some things in Bull's '*Harmonia Apostolica*'[k] and Baxter's Aphorisms. Baxter animadverted on Tully in several of his pieces. Tully answered the whole in a 'Letter to Mr. Richard Baxter,' occasioned by several injurious reflections of his upon a treatise, entitled, '*Justificatio Paulina*,' &c. This called forth Baxter's answer to Dr. Tully's angry letter.—Making the usual allowance for Baxter's refinements, I do not observe any sentiment on the subject of original sin materially different from what is usually held by Calvinistic writers. He was a firm believer in the original depravity of human nature; and that the only cure of that depravity is furnished by the redemption of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.[l]

[k] An interesting account of the controversy between Bull and Tully on the subject of justification, will be found in Nelson's 'Life of Bull,' pp. 212—244. Tully had the best of the argument without doubt, though Nelson ascribes the victory to Bull. Dr. Tully died in 1675.

[l] Among the Baxter MSS. in the Redcross-street library, is a long letter ad-

I must, on the same principle, here also introduce Baxter's book on 'Universal Redemption,' though it was not published till after his death. The editor, Mr. Joseph Read, informs us, in the preface, that he transcribed it while living in Mr. Baxter's family at Kidderminster, in 1657; and that "the ministers of Worcestershire, who usually attended on his Thursday lecture, and heard these disputations at their monthly meeting, were generally desirous to have them printed." This work is an elaborate discussion of one of the main points on which Baxter is considered to have departed from the Calvinistic scheme. His mind had been directed to it at a very early period; for at the end of his Aphorisms, published in 1649, he gives notice of something which "he had written on *universal redemption*," and which he only kept back for a time in consequence of his "continual sickness," and in the expectation that it might be rendered unnecessary by some production of another pen.

The next of his doctrinal works which requires attention, is his 'CATHOLIC THEOLOGY—plain, pure, peaceable: for pacification of the dogmatical word-warriors; who, by contending about things unrevealed, or not understood, and by putting verbal differences for real, and their arbitrary notions for necessary sacred truths, deceived and deceiving by ambiguous, unexplained words, have long been the shame of the Christian religion, a scandal and hardening to unbelievers, the incendiaries, dividers, and distracters of the church; the occasion of state discords and wars; the corrupters of the Christian faith, and the subverters of their own souls, and those of their followers: calling them to a blind zeal and wrathful warfare against true piety, love, and peace, and teaching them to censure, backbite, slander, and prate against each other, for things which they never understood. In three books. I. PACIFYING PRINCIPLES about God's decrees, foreknowledge, providence, operations, redemption, grace, man's power, free will, justification, merits, certainty of salvation, perseverance, &c. II. A PACIFYING PRAXIS, or dialogue about the five articles, justi-

dressed to Baxter, and occasioned by this Treatise. It was printed in the 'Monthly Repository,' vol. xix. pp. 577, 726; and by the editors is ascribed to Gilbert Clerke, who was a Unitarian of some celebrity. He was the author of several Socinian tracts, and engaged in a controversy about the doctrine of the Nicene Creed with Bishop Bull. A short account of him is given in Bull's Life by Nelson, pp. 502—512.

fication, &c., proving that men here contend almost only about ambiguous words and unrevealed things. III. PACIFYING DISPUTATIONS against some real errors which hinder reconciliation, viz., about physical predetermination, original sin, the extent of redemption, sufficient grace, imputation of righteousness, &c. Written chiefly for posterity, when sad experience hath taught men to hate theological wars, and to love, and seek, and call for peace.'

I have quoted at large the extended and curious title of this folio volume, which appeared in 1675, because it affords a specimen of Baxter's style of conducting discussion, and serves, in a great measure, for an analysis of the work. In the preface, he gives a brief history of his own mind, of some of the controversies in which he had been engaged, and of his design in this publication in particular.

" My mind being these many years immersed in studies of this nature, and having also long wearied myself in searching what fathers and schoolmen have said of such things before us, and my genius abhorring confusion and equivocals, I came, by many years' longer study to perceive, that most of the doctrinal controversies among Protestants, are far more about equivocal words than matter; and it wounded my soul to perceive what work, both tyrannical, and unskilful disputing clergymen had made these thirteen hundred years in the world! Experience, since the year 1643, till this year 1675, hath loudly called me to repent of my own prejudices, sidings, and censurings of causes and persons not understood, and of all the miscarriages of my ministry and life, which have been thereby caused; and to make it my chief work to call men that are within my hearing to more peaceable thoughts, affections, and practices. And my endeavours have not been in vain, in that the ministers of the county where I lived, were very many of such a peaceable temper, and a great number more through the land, by God's grace, (rather than any endeavours of mine,) are so minded. But the sons of the cowl were exasperated the more against me, and accounted him to be against every man, that called all men to love and peace, and was for no man as in a contrary way.

"And now, looking daily in this posture, when God calleth me hence; summoned by an incurable disease to hasten all that ever I will do in this world; being incapable of prevailing with the present church disturbers, I do apply myself to posterity, leaving them the sad warning of their ancestors' distractions,

as a pillar of salt, and acquainting them what I have found to be the cause of our calamities, and therein they will find the cure themselves."[m]

This work he fully expected would expose him to trouble and opposition from various quarters; but to his great astonishment, it met with no adversary during his life. He expected it would be the subject of controversy after his death; but in this respect also his anticipations have not been fulfilled. It still, I believe, remains without answer. It would be too much to infer from this, that all the positions maintained in it are generally admitted, or that no persons are disposed to dispute any of the views of its author. The size and character of the work have, I believe, deterred many persons from examining it with much care. A folio volume of 700 pages, replete with metaphysical distinctions, on every disputed point, in the most difficult doctrines of theology, has few charms for the general reader, and is even a formidable subject for the inquisitive, theological scholar to digest.

None of Baxter's works in English affords more striking illustration than this, of the amazing subtlety of his mind, as well as of the vastness of his reading, and his indefatigable application. The innumerable distinctions of the schoolmen, the debates among the Roman Catholic parties, and the contentions among Protestants, on all the subjects of which he treats, were perfectly familiar to him. The discussion, on his part, is carried on with so much ease, that though deeply serious, he seems as if he were playing with the difficulties which have perplexed and confounded others. Instead of finding

"No end, in wand'ring mazes lost,"

he threads the labyrinths with prodigious adroitness, and finds an out-gate where others had found only a pit or an insurmountable barrier. The depths in which many have been engulfed, seem but as the element in which he sports without danger and without fear. With the most peaceable intentions, he carries war into every camp, and makes havoc of every foe; never being at a loss for a weapon, and never dismayed by the front or menace of an antagonist. Desirous of putting an end to contention, he furnished fresh and enlarged means for carrying it on, in the very abundance of the material of war, with which he supplied his adversaries, and the unceremonious manner in which he treated them.

[m] Preface.

Amidst the dryness of metaphysical disquisition, however, and the keenness of theological debate, some fine passages occur illustrative of the comprehensiveness of his views, and the ardour of his devotion. Deep piety is the prominent feature of all Baxter's works; and it never, perhaps, appears to more advantage, than when he is engaged in those debates, which were powerfully calculated to excite his own passions and those of others. It was the oil that smoothed the troubled waters in which he passed his life, and which was always uppermost whatever was passing beneath.

If the preceding volume appears to the reader a surprising effort of talent and industry, he will be still more astonished with the next work of Baxter in this department. I refer to his Latin work, the only one which he wrote in that language, 'METHODUS THEOLOGIÆ CHRISTIANÆ,' &c. It appeared in 1681, and consists of more than 900 large folio pages: enough to make about four volumes of the size of the new edition of his works. Of this immense undertaking he gives the following account:

"Having long been purposing to draw up a method of theology, I now began it. I never yet saw a scheme or method of physics or theology, which gave any satisfaction to my reason; though many have attempted to exercise more accurateness in distribution, than all others that went before them; especially Dudley Fenner, Tzegedine, Sohnius, Gomarus, Amesius, Treleatius, Wollebius, &c., and our present busy boaster, Dr. Nicholas Gibbon, in his scheme. I could never yet see any whose confusion, or great defects, I could not easily discover; but not so easily amend. I had been twenty-six years convinced that dichotomizing will not do it, but that the divine trinity in unity hath expressed itself in the whole frame of nature and morality. I had long been thinking of a true method, and making some small attempts, but found myself insufficient for it; and so continued only thinking of it and studying it all these years. Campanella, I saw, had made the fairest attempt in the principles of nature, and Commenius after him; but yet, as I believe, he quite missed it in his first operative principles of heat and cold; mistaking the nature of cold and darkness. So he run his three principles, which he calleth primalities, into many subsequent notions, which were not provable or coherent. Having long read his physics, metaphysics, '*De Sensu Rerum*,' and

'*Atheismus Triumphatus*,' I found him mention theology, which put me in hope that he had there also made some attempts; but I could never hear of any one that had seen any such book of his. At last, Mr. George Lawson's '*Theopolitica*' came out, which reduced theology to a method more political and right, in the main, than any I had seen before him; but he had not hit on the true method of the *Vestigia Trinitatis*. But the very necessity of explaining the three articles of baptism, and the three summaries of religion, the creed, Lord's-prayer, and decalogue, hath led all the common catechisms, that go that way, into a truer method, than any of our exactest dichotomizers have hit on; not excepting Treleatius, Sohnius, or Amesius, which are the best.

"The nature of things convinced me that as physics are presupposed in ethics, and that morality is but the ordering of the rational nature and its actions; so that part of physics and metaphysics, which opens the nature of man and of God, who are the parties contracting, and the great subjects of theology and morality, is more nearly pertinent to a method of theology, and should have a larger place in it than is commonly thought of and given to it. Yet I know how uncouth it would seem, to put so much of these doctrines into a body of divinity; but the three first chapters of Genesis assured me that it was the Scripture method. When I had drawn up one scheme of the creation, and sent it the Lord Chief Baron Hale, because of our often communications on such subjects; and being now banished from his neighbourhood and the country where he lived, he received it with so great approbation, and importuned me so by letters to go on with that work, and not to fear being too much on philosophy, as added somewhat to my inclinations and resolutions. Through the great mercy of God, in my retirement at Totteridge, in a troublesome, smoky, suffocating room, in the midst of daily pains of the sciatica, and many worse, I set upon and finished all the schemes, and half the elucidations, in the end of the year 1669 and the beginning of 1670; which cost me harder studies than any thing that ever I had before attempted." [n]

In a subsequent part of his 'Life' he speaks of the expense which this work put him to, and of his disappointment in regard to its sale. "The times were so bad for selling books, that I was fain to be myself at the charge of printing my 'Methodus Theologiæ,' Some friends contributed about eighty pounds towards it; it

[n] Life, part iii. pp. 69, 70.

cost me one way or other about five hundred pounds; about two hundred and fifty pounds of which I received from those Nonconformists that bought them. The contrary party set themselves to hinder the sale of it, because it was mine, though else the doctrine of it, being half philosophical, and half conciliatory, would have pleased the learned part of them. But most lay it by as too hard for them, or as over scholastical and exact. I wrote it and my English 'Christian Directory,' to make up one complete body of theology; the Latin one the theory, and the English one the practical part. And the latter is commonly accepted because less difficult." [o]

This immense work, which occupied Baxter's mind so much during so many years, is divided into three parts. In the first he treats of the nature of things, in the second of the holy Scriptures, and in the third of the whole administration and practice of religion; in other words, the theory of natural religion, revealed religion, and the practical nature and design of religion. Or, taking another view of his plan, he treats of the kingdom of nature; the kingdom of grace, under the Mosaic economy; the kingdom of grace under the Gospel; and the kingdom of glory. He discusses, with great minuteness and at great length, the being and attributes of God; the constitution of the universe; the character and condition of man both before and after the fall; the moral administration of God under the law; the mediatorial or evangelical system in all its branches, including the person and work of Christ, the doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, of the Gospel, and the future state of rewards and punishments. To give even a faint outline of the innumerable discussions and definitions contained in the work, is impossible; what preceedes will afford however some idea of it.

He seems to have been partial to tracing a kind of trinity in unity in all things. A trinity of persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; a trinity of principles in man, which he calls power, intellect, and will; corresponding imperfectly with three principles in the nature of God—life, intellect, and will. He finds three kingdoms, or dispensations, nature, grace, and glory; in nature he finds three principles, light, heat, and motion; in the economy of grace he finds the Father governing, the Son saving, the Holy Spirit sanctifying; and God accomplishing all his designs of mercy in us by three principles, faith, hope, and love.

[o] Life, part iii. p. 190.

In the representation and working of this trinitarian scheme of philosophy, metaphysics, and morals, Baxter has displayed considerable ingenuity and vast labour. Many of his schemes or tables are formed with great care, and present some happy and useful arrangements and combinations. There is much, however, of what is fanciful and hypothetical in his system, and, taken as a whole, it is more calculated to amuse as a curious speculation or effort of genius, than to answer any important practical purpose. The work shows that the author is entitled to rank high among the metaphysico-theological writers of the period. I am, therefore, surprised that Mr. Morell has entirely omitted him in his very useful work on 'The Elements of the History of Philosophy and Science.' Whatever may be thought of his opinions, Baxter, in point of genius, as a metaphysician, is not unworthy of a place on the same roll with Cudworth, and Leibnitz, and Clarke; and is unquestionably superior to Bramhall and Tenison, Wilkins, Cumberland, and More.

As Baxter wrote occasionally some Latin verse, as well as English poetry, I shall close the account of this proof of his stupendous industry by quoting the lines with which he concludes it.

"Munde dolose vale: mihi vera palæstra fuisti:
Perficitur cursus: certa corona manet.
Vita fugax cessat: Præstant æterna caducis:
Mens superos visit: pulvere pulvis erit.
Excipe Christe tuum: tibi vixi: errata remitte:
Spe tibi commissum perfice Christe tuum.
Tu mortis mors: vitæ tu vita perennis:
Gloria nostra tua est gloria, lumen, amor.
Non loca, non cœtus, non hinc sperata videntur.
Optimus, Omnividens, Maximus illa videt." [p]

[p] I have observed, since writing the preceding account of the 'Methodus,' in a catalogue of his works, published at the end of his own edition of his 'Counsels to Young Men,' in 1682, a short analysis of this ponderous work, evidently written by himself. "It consists," he says, "of seventy-three tables, or methodical schemes, pretending to a juster methodizing of Christian verities, according to the matter and Scripture, than is yet extant; furnishing men with necessary distinctions on every subject; showing that trinity in unity is imprinted on the whole creation, and trichotomizing is the just distribution in naturals and morals. The first part of the kingdom of nature; the second of the kingdom of grace before Christ's incarnation; the third of the kingdom of grace and the Spirit, since the incarnation; the fourth of the kingdom of glory. All in one political method, in the efficience, constitution, and administration, namely, legislation, judgment, and execution. The first part mostly philosophical, with a full scheme of philosophy or ontology. The doctrine *de anima* most largely; with above two hundred select disputations; prolix ones on the trinity, predetermination, the faculties of the soul, original sin, and a multitude of controversies briefly decided." Had Baxter lived in the days of the schoolmen, he would have been the Thomas Aquinas, or Duns Scotus, of the period.

The last work of Baxter in this department, which it is necessary to notice, was published only a short time before his death, and bears a most appropriate title for the conclusion of our account of his doctrinal views: 'An End of Doctrinal Controversies, which have lately troubled the Churches, by reconciling Explication without much Disputing.' 1691. 8vo.

In his preface he gives a most characteristic account of his reasons for engaging so much in controversy, and of his object in this book in particular. "Wars," he says, "are most dreaded and hated by the country where they are; but not so much by the soldiers, who by them seek their prey and glory, as by the suffering inhabitants that lose thereby their property and peace, who yet are forced, or drawn to be siders, lest they suffer for neutrality.

"Religious (irreligious) wars are of no less dismal consequence, being about God himself, his will, and word; and that which more nearly toucheth our souls and everlasting state, than our houses and worldly welfare do. Yet because men are more sensible of their corporal than their spiritual concerns, these dogmatical wars are far less feared, and too commonly made the study and delight, not only of the military clergy, but also of the seduced and sequacious laity: though those who have the wisdom from above, which is pure and peaceable, condole the church's calamity hereby; knowing that envy and strife, the earthly, sensual, and devilish wisdom, cause confusion and every evil work. It is a heinous aggravation, that the militants, being men consecrated to love and peace, profanely father their mischiefs upon God, and do all as for religion and the church. Having these four-and-forty years, at least, been deeply sensible of this sin, danger, and misery of Christians, I have preached much and written more against it; to confute those extremes which cause divisions, and to reconcile those that think they differ where they do not; sometimes, also, using importunate petitions and pleas for peace, to those that have power to give it or promote it, and that use either word or sword against it. And with the sons of peace it hath not been in vain; but with those that are engaged in faction and malicious strife, I am proclaimed to be the militant enemy of concord, for persuading them to concord; and writing many books for peace and love, is taken for writing them against these. Controversies I have written of but only to end them, and not to make them; and who can reconcile them that never mentioneth them, or arbitrate in a cause unheard and not opened?

"But, readers, I must tell you that my title, 'An End of Doctrinal Controversies,' is not intended as prognostic, but as didactical and directive. I am far from expecting an end of controversies, while consecrated ignorance is by worldly interest, faction, and malice, mixed with pride sublimated to an envious zeal; and hath set up a trade of slandering all those that are true peacemakers, not concurring with them to destroy it, on pretence of defending, by their unpeaceable, pernicious terms. He that will now be taken for a peacemaker, must be content to be so called by a few, even by the sect that he chooseth to please, and be contrarily judged of by all the rest. And this satisfieth some, because their faction seemeth better than others, be they ever so few; and others because their faction is great, or rich, or uppermost, how noxious and unpeaceable soever." [q]

The conclusion of the preface is worthy of the writer, and in his best style. "The glorious light will soon end all our controversies, and reconcile those who by unfeigned faith and love are united in the Prince of Peace, or Head, by love dwelling in God and God in them. But false-hearted, malignant, carnal worldlings, that live in the fire of wrath and strife, will find, so dying, the woful maturity of their enmity to holy unity, love, and peace; and that the causeless shutting the true servants of Christ out of their churches, which should be the porch of heaven, is the way to be themselves shut out of the heavenly Jerusalem. If those that have long reproached me as unfit to be in their church, and said *Ex uno disce omnes*, with their leader, find any unsound or unprofitable doctrine here, I shall take it for a great favour to be confuted, even for the good of others excluded with me, when I am dead."

This work does not contain much that is new or original. It consists of twenty-five chapters on most of the topics on which he had treated often and largely before; particularly on the points embraced in the Arminian and Calvinistic controversy. The divine decrees, election and reprobation; natural power and free-will, original sin, universal grace, and redemption; justification and faith; good works, merit, assurance, perseverance, &c., all come under his review; and on these and their collateral subjects he may be considered as delivering his last thoughts.

Having come literally to the end of Baxter's doctrinal writ-

[q] Preface.

ings, this is perhaps the most appropriate place for stating what appears to have been his sentiments on the great leading points which have long been controverted among Christians. The task is far from being an easy one, and I doubt whether I shall be able satisfactorily to perform it. Its difficulty arises from the multitude of Baxter's controversial writings, from the innumerable distinctions with which they are filled, and from the extended and diversified explanations that he gives of every term and phrase which he employs. His conscientiousness, his fear of being misunderstood, his anxiety to render every thing clear and unambiguous, his wish to reconcile opposite and conflicting sentiments, and to humble the pride of contentious parties, by pointing out the errors to which their respective systems were liable; all tend to confound and to bewilder the reader of his controversial works, and to involve his real sentiments in considerable obscurity. Possessed of a mind uncommonly penetrating, he yet seems not to have had the faculty of compressing within narrow limits, his own views, or the accounts he was disposed to give of the views of others. When we expect he is about to state in a few words the sum of his belief, he flies off as it were at a tangent in pursuit of some adversary whom he has started, or proceeds to obviate some false construction which has been put, or which may be put on what he is going to say. He either never returns to the subject, or when he does return, it is but to make another flight from it, and to leave us as before.

All this arose, not from any indisposition to be explicit; for no man was more disposed to give a full and candid exposition of all he thought, and felt, and did; but from the peculiar character of his mind. When, for instance, he proposes to give an account of faith, election, grace, perseverance, instead of giving a clear definition of the terms, and showing how their various senses may be accounted for from conventional usage, consistently with the original and primary idea, he proceeds at once to discuss the various meanings of such words as they are commonly used, the ambiguities which belong to them, and the uncertainty of their signification, till we advert to the circumstances in which they occur. Hence, instead of saying at once how he used such terms in his own writings, he tells us of many kinds of faith, various acts of grace, and different species of election, perseverance, &c. He is perpetually distinguishing things into physical and moral, real and nominal,

material and formal. However important these distinctions are, they often render his writings tiresome to the reader, and his reasonings more frequently perplexing than satisfactory.

Baxter is generally understood to have pursued a middle course between Calvinism and Arminianism. That he tried to hold and to adjust the balance between the two parties, and that he was most anxious to reconcile them, are very certain. But it seems scarcely less evident, that he was much more a Calvinist than he was an Arminian. His declared approbation of the Assembly's Confession, and of the Synod of Dort's decisions, with trifling exceptions, are, I think, decisive on this point: while the general train of his writing, when he loses sight of controversy, is much more allied to the system of the Genevese Reformer, than to that of the Dutch Remonstrants.

While this seems to me very apparent, it must be acknowledged, that if certain views, which have often been given of Calvinism, are necessary to constitute a Calvinist, Richard Baxter was no believer in that creed. But an individual may hold the great leading outline of a particular system, without being expected to defend every dogma or iota in the writings of its founder. If this be implied in the profession of adherence to a common name, I doubt whether there is a Calvinist or an Arminian in the world.

Baxter, if I may collect his sentiments from a general knowledge of his writings, rather than from particular passages and statements, held that there is a portion of common grace bestowed on all, which, if rightly improved, would lead to most important and salutary results; that resistance to this constitutes a leading part of man's guilt: yet that this grace, from the indisposition of man, is not productive of saving effects, unless there is added to it a portion of special grace, which never fails to accomplish its design—the salvation of the individual on whom it is bestowed.

"As there is a common grace," he says, "actually extended to mankind, (that is, common mercies contrary to their merit,) so there is such a thing as sufficient grace, *in suo genere*, which is not effectual. By *sufficient grace* here, I mean such, without which man's will *cannot*, and with which it *can* perform, the commanded act toward which it is moved, when yet it doth not perform it.[r] In answer to the question, "Whether any men in the world have grace sufficient to repent and believe savingly

[r] End of Controversies, p. 162.

who do not?" he says, after telling us that he knows nothing about the matter, "but that if we may conjecture upon probabilities, it seemeth most likely, that there is such a sufficient grace, or power, to repent and believe savingly in some that use it not, but perish." This seems to me very inexplicable.

He believed in election, but not that reprobation is its counterpart, as it is too commonly represented. In the following passage he seems to express this sentiment very fairly: "By all this it appeareth that *election* and *reprobation* go not *pari passu*, or are not equally ascribed to God; for in *election*, God is the cause of the means of salvation by his grace, and of all that truly tendeth to procure it. But on the other side, God is no cause of any sin which is the means and merit of damnation; nor the cause of damnation, but on the supposition of man's sin. So that sin is foreseen in the person decreed to damnation, but not caused, seeing the decree must be denominated from the effect and object. But in election, God decreeth to give us his grace, and be the chief cause of all our holiness; and doth not elect us to salvation on foresight that we will do his will, or be sanctified by ourselves without him."[s]

He was accused as holding some very erroneous and dangerous notions, respecting the work of Christ. It was chiefly in reference to the Antinomian controversy, that these charges were brought. But Dr. Stillingfleet, in his work on the 'Satisfaction of Christ,' fully vindicates him from all those charges which insinuated that his sentiments were allied to Socinianism. After quoting various passages from Baxter's writings, which had been found fault with, and showing the sense which they must bear to be consistent with his sentiments elsewhere clearly expressed, Stillingfleet justly remarks on him: "Some liberty must be allowed to *metaphysical heads* to show their skill in distinctions, above other men; and sometimes when there is no cause for them. But we must not presently charge men with heresy, for new-invented distinctions; wherein they may be allowed to please themselves, so they do not cumber the faith with them; nor be too sharp upon their brethren for not apprehending the use of them."[t] So far were matters carried on this subject, by some of the keen supporters of the high Calvinistic view of the satisfaction of Christ, that after his death, some friend published, 'A Plea for the late Mr. Baxter, and those that speak of the sufferings of Christ as he

[s] End of Controversies, p. 44. [t] Part ii. p. 159.

does, in answer to Mr. Lobb's insinuated charge against them, in his late appeal to the Bishop of Worcester [Stillingfleet] and Dr. Edwards.' London, 1702.

On the subject of redemption, it is evident that he believed it to be, in a certain sense, general or universal; that Christ so died for all men, as to secure for them a certain portion of benefit. This view of his death he regarded as the ground of the general invitations of the Gospel, and of God's treatment of those who reject it. It is clear, however, that he also believed in what may be called a decretive speciality of the death of Christ. "When we speak of Christ's death," he says, "as a sacrifice for the sins of all the world, we mean no more but that *esse cognito et volito*, the undertaking was so far for all, as that all should have the conditional promise, or gift of life, by the merits of it."[u] On the other point he thus expresses himself: "He whose sufferings were primarily *satisfaction* for *sin*, were secondarily *meritorious* of the means to bring men to the intended end; that is, of the word and Spirit, by which Christ causeth sinners to believe: so that faith is a fruit of the death of Christ in a remote or secondary sense."[x] "Christ died for all, but not for all alike or equally; that is, he intended good to all, but not an equal good, with an equal intention."[y]

The following statement of his sentiments on the subject of justifying faith, though it employs a redundancy of language, will not be objected to by many: "Justifying faith is not the reception of the knowledge or sense of our former justification, nor the belief that our sins were before actually pardoned, or that they are so; but it is the true belief of the Gospel, and the sincere acceptance of Christ as he is offered therein. That is, of Christ as Christ—as the Son of God, that hath given himself a sacrifice for sin, and offereth himself to me to be my Saviour from the guilt and power of sin, and eternal damnation; and to give me eternal glory, and to be my Teacher, and my King in ruling me, in order thereto. Men are not called to believe that they are justified, but to believe for justification."[z]

[u] Catholic Theology, part iii. p. 67.

[x] Ibid. p. 69.

[y] End of Controv. p. 160. Baxter was as much a Calvinist on the subject of the extent of the atonement, as the late Rev. Andrew Fuller; and may be regarded as distinguished from the other Calvinists of his time, as Fuller was distinguished from Abraham Booth. Of the controversy between Owen and Baxter, respecting the death of Christ, an account will be found in the Memoirs of Owen. The works of Booth and Fuller, on the same subject, are worth consulting.

[z] Confession of Faith, p. 166.

His views on the subject of the perseverance of the saints, have been noticed and stated already. While it appears that he would not have expressed himself so confidently on this subject as on some others, and did not rank it among truths of the first importance, he held substantially the Calvinistic view of it.

On the freedom of the will, he has generally been considered as holding what may be called liberal views, inclining more to liberty than to necessity. But I apprehend this was more in appearance than reality. In the following passages from his 'Catholic Theology,' he expresses sentiments in the fullest accordance with the strictest views of Calvinistic theology on this subject. They may be considered as giving the substance of his opinions on the whole controversy; so that I shall not trouble the reader with any more extracts.

"As all being is originally from God, so there is a continued divine causation of creatures, without which they would all cease, or be annihilated; which some call a continued creation, and some an emanation, and some a continued action, or operation, *ad rerum esse*. It is an intolerable error to hold, that God hath made the world, or any part of it, self-sufficient, or independent of himself, as to being, action, or perfection. We grant, therefore, that all the world is so far united to God, as to depend on his continued causality; and that the beams do not more depend on the sun, or light, heat, and motion, on the sun; or the branches, fruit, and leaves, more depend on the tree, than the creation on God. But yet these are not parts of God, as the fruit and leaves are of the tree, and as the beams are of the sun; but they are creatures, because God's emanation or causation is creation, causing the whole being of the effect."[a]

"It is confessed that there is no substance beside himself, which God is not the maker of; nor any action of which he is not the first Cause. God may well be called the perfect first Cause of human actions, in that he giveth man all his natural faculties, and a power to act or not act at this time, or to choose this or that, and as the fountain of nature, and life, and motion, doth afford his influx necessary to this free agency. So that whenever any act is done, as an act *in generi*, God is the first Cause of it; for it is done by the power which he giveth and continueth, and by his vital influx, and there is no power used to produce it which is not given by God."[b]

[a] Catholic Theology, part iii. p. 113. [b] Ibid. part i. p. 29.

"I conclude with this repeated profession, that I am fully satisfied, that all the rest of the controversies, about grace and nature, predestination and redemption, as they stand between the Synod of Dort and the Arminians, are of no greater moment than I have often expressed in this book; and that the true life of all the remaining difficulties is, in this controversy between the defenders of necessary predestination, and those of free-will; that is, not what free-will sinners have left, but whether ever in angels or innocent man, there was such a thing as a will, that can, or ever did, determine itself to a volition or nolition in *specie morali*, without the predetermining, efficient, necessitating premonition of God as the first Cause."[c]

I apprehend that I have now pursued the doctrinal sentiments of Baxter far enough for the satisfaction or gratification of the reader. While I consider him to have held sound and scriptural sentiments on all important subjects, I am very far from thinking that he always expressed himself correctly when discussing them. On the contrary, his language is frequently ambiguous or obscure; in many instances it is calculated to obstruct the inquirer, or occasion him great perplexity; and not seldom, it is so grossly incorrect, as to require to be most liberally construed in connexion with his well-known general sentiments, to avoid charging him with opinions subversive of the grace and glory of the Gospel.

I am fully aware that many passages might be selected from his controversial writings, of a very different tenor from those which I have quoted; and that it might be easy to prove Baxter a heretic, or at least guilty of gross self-contradiction, by detaching many of his statements from the connexion in which they occur. This, however, would be a species of injustice, which, though common enough among controversialists, ought to be discountenanced by every lover of truth. Baxter experienced much of this treatment while he lived; and it followed his writings long after their author's death. The most perfect specimen of this with which I am acquainted, and which may be reverted to as a storehouse of the inconsistencies of Baxter, is a quarto volume with the following title: 'Baxterianism Barefaced; drawn from a literal Transcript of Mr. Baxter's, and the Judgment of others in the most radical Doctrines of

[c] Catholic Theology, part i. p. 118.

Faith, compared with those of the Orthodox, both Conformist and Nonconformist,' &c. By Thomas Edwards, esq. 1699.[d] This Nimrod among heresy hunters, endeavours to crucify Baxter between the Quakers and the Roman Catholics, exhibiting the doctrines of these two parties in every page, in parallel columns, and Baxter between them. Thus endeavouring to produce an impression that he was allied in sentiment to the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works on the one hand, and to the mistaken views of the Quakers, on the subject of divine influence, on the other. Curious coincidences do occur; but who that knows any thing of the real sentiments of Baxter, can have the least idea that his doctrinal system bears any resemblance to either of those parties?

To form a correct judgment of Baxter's sentiments, we must consult his practical and devotional writings. We must attend him, not when sitting in the critic's chair, or occupying the controversial arena, but when dealing with sinners, or conversing as a sinner himself, with God. His eloquent and fervid addresses to men, and his no less eloquent and burning addresses to the throne of the Most High, present such a view of his real sentiments, as cannot be mistaken. In these compositions, he is thinking of no difficulties in his theological system, or in the theological systems of others; he is only intent on presenting, in the most simple and impressive forms, the great doctrines of the fall and corruption of our nature, the fulness and freeness of divine grace, and the necessity of faith and repentance. The love of God, as manifested to apostate transgressors, in the gift and sacrifice of his own Son, is then the entire theme of his discourse, as it was the only ground of his own hope. Nothing

[d] I know nothing of this Edwards, except from his book. He seems to have been one of the high Calvinists of the time, who entered very deeply into the Crispian controversy. He tried his poetical, as well as his polemical, powers on Baxter. It was the fashion to write epitaphs for this excellent man; and the following is the doggerel slander of Thomas Edwards, esq.:—

"Baxter, farewell! *Hen ffydd's** epitome,
Rome's vatican and conclave fell in thee;
St. Omer's, mourn! for thy disciples will
By this find lesser grist come to thy mill.
To say no more, write on this tomb, Here lies
The mirror of self inconsistencies:
Or rather thus, Papal conformity
Hid under Reformation here doth lie."—p. 223.

* This he interprets, "Rome's Faith;" literally, "Old Faith."

of conditional justification, of terms and qualifications, of the merit of works, or the limitations of the divine call, is then to be found. All is represented as a scheme of sovereign mercy, reigning through righteousness, and dispensed with infinite generosity by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All his own experience was that of a man who felt himself to be a chief sinner, saved solely by the mercy of God. This appears in the deep humility of his soul, in his fervent gratitude, in his holy life, and in his happy, though humble, state of mind, in the prospect of death. There was nothing of metaphysics in the influence of Baxter's religion, however much of it belonged to the manner of stating his sentiments. His views of the corruption of human nature, and of the responsibility of man, led him to dwell much on these topics, and to urge them powerfully on all sinners. To salvation as the cure of sin, he attached as much importance as to salvation considered as deliverance from its punishment. Hence he cultivated this curative process in himself, and recommended its cultivation to others. He could find happiness only in likeness to God, which constituted, therefore, his constant desire, as it was the object of his most earnest recommendation.

While satisfied that among Baxter's sentiments, no important or vital error will be found, yet in the style and method in which he too generally advocated or defended them, there is much to censure. The wrangling and disputatious manner in which he presented many of his views, was calculated to gender an unsanctified state of mind in persons who either abetted or opposed his sentiments. His scholastic and metaphysical style of arguing is unbefitting the simplicity of the Gospel, and cannot fail to injure it wherever such is employed. It not only savours too much of the spirit of the schools, and the philosophy of this world; but places the truths of revelation on a level with the rudiments of human science.

I am not sure whether certain effects which began early in the last century to appear among the Presbyterian part of the Nonconformists, may not be traced in some degree to the speculative and argumentative writings of Baxter. His influence over this class of his brethren, was evidently very great. He contributed more than any other man to mitigate the harsh and forbidding aspect which the Presbyterians presented during the civil wars and the commonwealth. This was well, but he did not stop here. He was inimical to all the existing

systems of doctrine and discipline then contended for, or ever before known in the world; while he did not present any precisely defined system as his own. He opposed Calvinism; he opposed Arminianism; he would not allow himself to be considered an Episcopalian, in the ordinary acceptation of the word; he denied that he was a Presbyterian, and scorned to be thought an Independent. He held something in common with them all, and yet he was somewhat different from all. He contended for a system more general, and more liberal than was then approved; and, as we have stated, wished to place a variety of theological truths on grounds belonging rather to philosophy or metaphysics, than to revelation.

On himself, this species of latitudinarianism produced little injurious effect, but I fear it had a baneful influence on others. The rejection of all human authority and influence in religion, requires to be balanced by a very strong sense of the divine authority, to prevent its generating a state of mind more characterised by pride of intellect, and independence of spirit, than by the humility and diffidence which are essential features in the Christian character. It is a singular fact, that the Presbyterians, though at first more rigid in their doctrinal views, and more exclusive in their spirit and system of church government, than the Independents, became before the death of Baxter the more liberal party. High views began to be ascribed by them to their now moderate brethren; and, to avoid the charge of Antinomianism, which Baxter was too ready to prefer against such as differed from some of his views, the Presbyterians seem gradually to have sunk into a state of low moderate orthodoxy, in which there was little of the warmth or vitality of evangelical religion.

In further illustration of the influence now adverted to, it must be remarked, that the first stage in that process of deterioration which took place among the Presbyterian dissenters, was generally characterised by the term Baxterianism: a word to which it is difficult to attach a definite meaning. It denotes no separate sect or party, but rather a system of opinions on doctrinal points, verging towards Arminianism, and which ultimately passed to Arianism and Socinianism. Even during Baxter's own life, while the Presbyterians taxed the Independents with Antinomianism, the latter retorted the charge of Socinianism, or at least of a tendency towards it in some of the opinions maintained both by Baxter and others of that

party. To whatever cause it is to be attributed, it is a melancholy fact, that the declension which began even at this early period in the Presbyterian body, went on slowly but surely, till from the most fervid orthodoxy, it finally arrived at the frigid zone of Unitarianism.

I wish not to be understood as stating, that Baxter either held any opinions of this description, or was conscious of a tendency in his sentiments towards such a fearful consummation; but, that there was an injurious tendency in his manner of discussing certain important subjects. It was subtle, and full of logomachy; it tended to unsettle, rather than to fix and determine; it gendered strife, rather than godly edifying. It is not possible to study such books, as his 'Methodus,' and his 'Catholic Theology,' without experiencing, that we are brought into a different region from apostolic Christianity: a region of fierce debate and altercation about words, and names, and opinions; in which all that can be said for error is largely dwelt upon, as well as what can be said for truth. The ambiguities of language, the diversities of sects, the uncertainties of human perception and argument, are urged, till the force of revealed truth is considerably weakened, and confidence in our own judgment of its meaning greatly impaired. Erroneous language is maintained to be capable of sound meaning, and the most scriptural phrases to be susceptible of unscriptural interpretation, till truth and error almost change places, and the mind is bewildered, confounded, and paralysed.

Into this mode of discussing such subjects, was this most excellent man led, partly by the natural constitution of his mind, which has often been adverted to; partly by his ardent desire of putting an end to the divisions of the Christian world, and producing universal concord and harmony. He failed where success was impossible, however plausible might have been the means which he employed. He understood the causes of difference and contention better than their remedies; hence the measures which he used, frequently aggravated instead of curing the disease. His controversial writings, it is said, "were never answered." To answer them was impracticable. They were entrenched within such lines of words, such barriers of technicalities, and such interminable series of distinctions, that any approach to the main subject was rendered utterly hopeless. Baxter was clad in an impenetrable coat of mail of his own framing, which not only entirely protected its wearer, but presented innumerable points,

that rendered grappling with him exceedingly dangerous to the assailant. Conscious of his own integrity and safety, and not unconscious of his giant strength, he hurled fearless defiance at all adversaries, and quietly waited the onset.

Meanwhile that cause which he had so much at heart, lost rather than gained, from these means of promoting it. Error was not overthrown or dislodged; the chief difficulties attaching to certain truths, remained where they had ever been; for the obscurity hanging over the divine purposes and administration, continued as profound as ever. In all this we are taught the imbecility of man, and how little he is capable of achieving, even with the best intentions, without the special blessing of God. Man's apparent intelligence and wisdom have often been considered as of vast importance to the interests of truth and of heaven; but have nearly as often as they have been thus regarded, occasioned disappointment and regret. It is thus God enforces his own injunction; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; but let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord."

While a portion of evil, probably resulted from Baxter's mode of conducting controversy, and no great light was thrown by him on some of the dark and difficult subjects which he so keenly discussed, I have no doubt he contributed considerably to produce a more moderate spirit towards each other, between Calvinists and Arminians, than had long prevailed. Though he satisfied neither party, he must have convinced both, that great difficulties exist on the subjects in debate, if pursued beyond a certain length; that allowance ought to be made by each, for the weakness or prejudices of the other; and that genuine religion is compatible with some diversity of opinion respecting one or all of the five points. In as far as such an effect has arisen from his doctrinal writings, the church of Christ has derived benefit from them. If my opinion may be expressed at the end of this long chapter in a single sentence, I would say, Baxter was probably such an Arminian as Richard Watson; and as much a Calvinist as the late Dr. Edward Williams.

CHAPTER III.

WORKS ON CONVERSION.

Introductory Remarks—'Treatise of Conversion'—'Call to the Unconverted'—'Now or Never'—'Directions for a Sound Conversion'—'Directions to the Converted'—'Character of a Sound Christian'—'Mischiefs of Self-ignorance'—The Countess of Balcarras—Controversy with Bishop Morley—'A Saint or a Brute'—Various smaller Treatises—Concluding Observations.

THE class of books to which this chapter is devoted, must ever rank high, perhaps I should say highest, among the works of Baxter. As they treat of the most important subject which can occupy the attention of mankind in its degenerate state; so they discuss that subject with a power which is probably unequalled in human writings. While Baxter's talents were adequate to any subject to which they might be directed, the conversion of men was the grand object to which he devoted them, in the fullest extent in which they could be exercised. Other things he might resort to as recreation, or submit to as duty; this employment constituted his sacred delight. His whole soul was here eminently at home; he revels and luxuriates in it, exulting in the privilege of calling sinners to repentance, and thus promoting the glory of his Lord and Master.

In this department of writing, I am not aware that he had properly any predecessor in the English language. Among the works both of the episcopal and puritan divines, many excellent discourses on most branches of Christian faith and duty had previously appeared. The Puritans excelled especially in the expository and didactic departments of instruction; while many Conformists produced very able treatises on the several branches of theological and moral truth. But by no one nor all of them was produced such a mass of pungent and powerful addresses to the consciences of ignorant, ungodly, and thoughtless

men, as by Baxter. Conversion in all its important aspects, and unutterably important claims, had not before been discussed, at least in our language; nor had any man previously employed so boundless a range of topics, in conjunction with such an energetic and awakening style of addressing sinners.

To excel in this mode of preaching, requires talents and properties of no ordinary kind. There must be a combination of scriptural knowledge and ardent piety, with a correctness of thinking, as well as a fervency of imagination and manner, which are rarely found in one individual. Incorrect notions of the boundless grace and mercy of the Gospel, led some of Baxter's predecessors in the awakening style of preaching, to deal out the unmitigated thunders of the Law. These, however, will roll in the ears of sinners in vain, unless mellowed with the meek and persuasive allurements of the Gospel. Baxter knew how to connect them, so as to alarm and convince, without driving to despair. Taylor could describe the loathsomeness and guilt of the sinner, and the certainty as well as awfulness of his danger, with an exhaustless and withering power of illustration. He could inculcate penance and mortification with great force of argument. But his manner partook more of monkish severity, —of the gloom and austerity of the cloister—than of the faithfulness and tenderness of Jesus and his apostles. Baxter's severity never partakes of the nature of misanthropy. He never seems to take pleasure in wounding. He employs the knife with an unsparing hand; but that hand always appears to be guided by a tender, sympathising heart. He denounces sin in language of tremendous energy, and exposes its hideous nature by the light of the flames of hell itself; but it is to urge the sinner to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on the hope set before him. He never appears as the minister of divine vengeance, come to execute wrath, and to make men miserable before the time; but as an angel of mercy, brandishing a flaming sword to drive men to the tree of life.

In the writings of Owen and Howe, and the preachers of the same school, doctrinal discussion, and elaborate argument in support and illustration of Gospel truths, are more prominent than their addresses to sinners. This, perhaps, may be accounted for, by the different circumstances of the people whom they addressed. Their congregations consisted chiefly of a select company of believers, or of those who made a credible profession of the Gospel. Hence their discourses were chiefly em-

ployed in instructing and building up. Baxter's hearers in Kidderminster, where most of his works of this class were produced, were of a different description; a large mass of ignorant, wicked persons, chiefly in the lower walks of life. When he entered on his labours among them, there was scarcely a vestige of religion in the place. He studied the best methods of gaining their attention, and of rousing them to repentance and reformation. How admirably he succeeded is evident, both from the discourses which he produced, and the effects which resulted from them. The character of his early preaching remained, as is generally the case, to the last. The Christian minister who has this kind of work to do (and what Christian minister has it not to do more or less?) would therefore do well, to study this portion of Baxter's writings.

To excel in this kind of preaching, he was eminently qualified. He possessed an untiring capability of application; an uncommon degree of acuteness and nicety of discernment; a profound knowledge of the depths of iniquity belonging to the human heart; a fearless fidelity in the discharge of his duty; a constant sense of the divine presence on his mind, along with an impression, which seems never to have left him, that death was just at hand.

> "He preach'd, as never sure to preach again,
> And as a dying man to dying men!"[e]

He was gifted with exhaustless powers of expression, and an exuberance of imagination which supplied unfailing stores of language and illustration. He had also a soft, flexible, melodious voice; a tenderness, pathos, and solemnity of manner, which clothed all he said with dignity and love.

With such qualifications, presenting themselves even on the very surface of those discourses by which his popularity is still maintained, it is not surprising that, like some distinguished men in other professions, he carried those labours in which he had no prototype, to a perfection which has never been excelled. It might be easy to produce specimens, both from Baxter's time and since, of greater profundity of thought, and greater originality of conception; of more refinement of language,—though his language is often peculiarly happy; of more accuracy of argument and statement; of detached passages more

[e] Baxter's 'Poetical Fragments,' p. 30.

tremendous or more touching, than any occurring in Baxter's writings on Conversion: but we have nothing that will admit of comparison with them as a whole—nothing so pointed—so awful—and yet so full of tenderness and compassion.

It is to this preaching we must chiefly look as the means of those amazing effects which, under divine influence, were produced at Kidderminster, while Baxter laboured there. We have no account of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit,—of any thing corresponding with what is called, in America, a revival,—during the period of Baxter's residence in that town. But the effects produced by his ministry are perfectly intelligible to all who look at the means employed, and attend to the promised blessing of God in connexion with them. Baxter was a man of faith and prayer; he was also a man of unwearied labour. He preached in season, and out of season. He was an instrument fit for the work, and diligently employed all the means which God had put in his power. While he did so, he found, what every faithful labourer will also find, that he did not labour for nought, or spend his strength in vain.

These general observations will supersede the necessity of repeating the same things, on noticing the successive publications relative to Conversion, which he produced; and to which we shall now proceed.

The first work of this class is a 'Treatise of Conversion; preached and now published for the use of those that are strangers to a true conversion, especially the grossly ignorant and ungodly.' 1657. 4to.[f] "It was the substance," he says, "of some plain sermons on conversion, which Mr. Baldwin, who lived in my house, and learned the short-hand character in which I wrote my pulpit notes, had transcribed. Though I had no leisure for this or other writings, to take much care of the style, or to add any ornaments, or citations of authors, I thought it might better pass as it was than not at all; and that if the author missed the applause of the learned, the book might yet be profitable to the ignorant, as it proved, through the great mercy of God."[g]

He dedicates the volume, in a most affectionate and faithful manner, to the inhabitants of the borough and foreign of Kidderminster. A few sentences of this address deserve to be

[f] Works, vol. vii. [g] Life, part i. p. 114.

quoted, as they explain the nature of the work, and illustrate the spirit of the man.

"As it was the unfeigned love of your souls that hath hitherto moved me much to print what I have done, that you might have the help of those truths which God hath acquainted me with, when I am dead and gone, so is it the same affection that hath persuaded me here to send you this familiar discourse. It is the same that you heard preached: and the reasons that moved me to preach it, do move me now to publish it; that if any of you have forgot it, it may be brought to your remembrance; or if it worked not upon you in the hearing, yet, in the deliberate perusal it may work. I bless the Lord that there are so many among you that know, by experience, the nature of conversion, which is the cause of my abundant affection towards you, above any other people that I know. But I see that there is no place or people on earth that will answer our desires, or free us from those troubles that constantly attend our earthly state. I have exceeding cause to rejoice in very many of you; but in many, also, I have cause of sorrow. Long have I travailed, (as Paul speaks, Gal. iv. 19,) as in birth, till Christ be formed in you. For this have I studied, and prayed, and preached; for this have I dealt with you in private exhortation; for this have I sent you all such books as I conceived suitable to your needs, and yet, to the grief of my soul, I must speak it, the lives of many of you declare that this great work is yet undone. I believe God, and therefore I know that you must every soul of you be converted, or condemned to everlasting punishment. And, knowing this, I have told it you over and over again. I have showed you the proof and reasons of it, and the certain misery of an unconverted state; I have earnestly besought you and begged of you to return, and if I had tears at command, I should have mixed all these exhortations with my tears; and if I had but time and strength, (as I have not,) I should have made bold to have come once more to you, and sit with you in your houses, and entreated you on the behalf of your souls, even twenty times for once that I have entreated you. The God that sent me to you knows that my soul is grieved for your blindness, and stubbornness, and wickedness, and misery, more than for all the losses and crosses in the world; and that my heart's desire and prayer for you to God, is that you may yet be converted and saved." [h]

[h] Works, vol. vii. Preface, pp. iii. iv.

A man who speaks in this earnest and affectionate tone, cannot fail to be heard. The people must have been impressed with his sincerity; his love gained their confidence; and his plain and striking appeals thus found access to their consciences and hearts.

The treatise itself is founded on Matt. xviii. 3, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." In a series of chapters, he explains the nature of conversion; proves that none but those who are converted can be saved; illustrates the misery of the unconverted, and the benefits of conversion; and discusses at length twenty hinderances to conversion.

It is easy to conceive of a more logical arrangement than what is here described and followed. Exceptions might also be taken to some of Baxter's definitions and distinctions, though they do not affect any thing of importance. There will also be perceived an occasional redundancy and repetition in some of his thoughts; for which there is always an apology in preaching: yet it is altogether a very admirable treatise. He thus beautifully apologises for the plainness and earnestness of his manner:

"The commonness and the greatness of men's necessity, commanded me to do any thing that I could for their relief, and to bring forth some water to cast upon this fire, though I had not at hand a silver vessel to carry it in, nor thought it the most fit. The plainest words are the most profitable oratory in the weightiest matters. Fineness is for ornament, and delicacy for delight; but they answer not necessity, though sometimes they may modestly attend that which answers it. Yea, when they are conjunct, it is hard for the necessitous hearer or reader to observe the matter of ornament and delicacy, and not to be carried from the matter of necessity; and to hear or read a neat, concise, sententious discourse, and not to be hurt by it; for it usually hindereth the due operation of the matter, keeps it from the heart, stops it in the fancy, and makes it seem as light as the style. We use not to stand upon compliment, when we run to quench a common fire, nor to call men out to it by an eloquent speech. If we see a man fall into fire or water, we stand not upon mannerliness in plucking him out, but lay hands upon him as we can without delay."[1]

[1] Works, vol. vii. Preface, p. ix.

Common as preaching is among us, the style best adapted to the pulpit, and to the great subjects which are there discussed, is, I fear, very imperfectly understood. In some instances the language of the preacher is correct, chaste, classical; but the discussion is flat, cold, and unimpressive. The truth is neither concealed nor misrepresented: but there is an entire absence of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." In other cases, the pulpit is degraded by vulgarity and oddity, or every kind of low buffoonery. This is done for the avowed purpose of gaining attention, and rendering truth familiar. Such persons would seem to forget that it is practicable to be plain, without becoming low; to strike and secure attention, without becoming harlequins and buffoons. Who ever heard of men being converted by apes and mountebanks? In a third class, finery and ornament are mistaken for eloquence; and the Gospel is supposed to be preached with power, when it is little better than buried under the rubbish of words and masses of gorgeous or tawdry figures.

All these and many other vices which accompany preaching, arise from preachers being occupied with something else than their subject and the eternal good of their audience. If the mind is but sufficiently impressed with these, there will be no disposition to cultivate either the ludicrous or the fine, the lofty or the low, in setting forth the words of eternal life. Simplicity with earnestness is the only style of speaking which becomes the ministry of the Gospel. The one will enable the preacher to convey truth to the understanding, the other will give him the command of the heart. Impressed himself, he will impress others, and what he himself clearly understands, he will make intelligible to his audience. These were the things which Baxter studied; and they constituted the power and charm of his eloquence. Thousands hung upon his lips when he preached; not to be dazzled or amused, but to be convinced of their danger, or led to the remedy. His popularity arose chiefly from his impassioned earnestness and solemnity. His hearers had no opportunity to be thinking of the man, or of any thing about him; while he spoke, their thoughts were fixed on themselves, or on Christ; and when they left him, they were compelled to think and to speak, not of Richard Baxter, but of the awful or delightful subject which he had brought before them.

His 'Treatise on Conversion,' was followed shortly after by

the most widely-circulated of all his publications, 'A Call to the Unconverted to turn and live, from the Living God.'[k] The preface to this treatise is dated Dec. 10, 1657. The former treatise had appeared in June, of the same year. Of a work so well known as the 'Call to the Unconverted,' it is scarcely necessary for me to speak. It is worthy, however, of historical record, that he was induced to undertake these works on Conversion, by Archbishop Usher. That eminent man, no doubt, perceived what constituted the *forté* of Baxter, and, therefore, suggested an employment so well suited to his powers. The following passage of his preface to the 'Call' contains this circumstance, and gives some account of the order in which he intended to pursue his task.

"In the short acquaintance I had with that reverend, learned servant of Christ, Bishop Usher, he was oft, from first to last, importuning me to write a Directory for the several ranks of professed Christians, which might distinctly give each one their portion; beginning with the unconverted, and then proceeding to the babes in Christ, and then to the strong; and mixing some special helps against the several sins that they are addicted to. By the suddenness of his motion at our first congress, I perceived it was in his mind before; and I told him, both that it was abundantly done by many already, and that his unacquaintedness with my weakness might make him think me fitter for it than I was. But this did not satisfy him, he still made it his request. I confess I was not moved by his reasons, nor did I apprehend any great need of doing more than is done in that way; nor that I was likely to do more. And, therefore, I parted from him without the least purpose to answer his desire. But since his death his words often came into my mind; and the great reverence which I bore to him, did the more incline me to think with some complacency of his motion. Having of late intended to write a 'Family Directory,' I began to apprehend how congruously the forementioned work should lead the way; and the several conditions of men's souls be spoken of, before we come to the several relations. Hereupon I resolved, by God's assistance, to proceed in the order following. First, to speak to the impenitent, unconverted sinners, who are not yet so much as purposing to turn; or at least are not setting about the work. With these, I thought, a

[k] Works, vol. vii.

wakening persuasive was a more necessary means than mere directions; for directions suppose men willing to obey them. But the persons that we have first to deal with, are wilful and asleep in sin, and as men that are past feeling, having given themselves over to sin with greediness. My next work must be for those that have some purposes to turn, and are about the work, to direct them for a thorough and a true conversion, that they miscarry not in the birth. The third part must be directions for the younger and weaker sort of Christians, that they may be established, built up, and persevere. The fourth part, directions for lapsed and backsliding Christians, for their safe recovery. Beside these, there is intended some short persuasions against some special errors of the times, and against some common killing sins. As for directions to doubting troubled consciences, that is done already; and the strong I shall not write directions for, because they are so much taught of God already. And then the last part is intended more especially for families, as such, directing the several relations in their duties."[1]

The 'Call' appears to be the substance of a sermon which he had previously preached from Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. He prefixes to it a prefatory address to "all unsanctified persons who shall read the book, especially his hearers in the parish of Kidderminster;" which is itself a powerfully-awakening sermon; full of the most faithful statements and expostulations. The results in the conversion of men, arising from this book, have been greater probably than have arisen from any other mere human performance. His own account of the effects produced by it, which had come to his knowledge long before his death, must be given in his own language. And as it has passed through editions almost innumerable since, the good effected by it is beyond all calculation.

"God hath blessed it with unexpected success beyond all the rest that I have written, except the 'Saint's Rest.' In a little more than a year, there were about twenty thousand of them printed by my own consent, and about ten thousand since, besides many thousands by stolen impression, which poor men stole for lucre' sake. Through God's mercy, I have had information of almost whole households converted by this small book, which I set so light by; and, as if all this in England, Scotland,

[1] Works, vol. vii. pp. 331, 332.

and Ireland, were not mercy enough to me, God, since I was silenced, hath sent it over on his message to many beyond the seas. For when Mr. Elliot had printed all the Bible in the Indians' language, he next translated this my 'Call to the Unconverted,' as he wrote to us here: and though it was here thought prudent to begin with the 'Practice of Piety,' because of the envy and distaste of the times against me, he had finished it before that advice came to him. Yet God would make some further use of it, for Mr. Stoop, the pastor of the French church in London, being driven hence by the displeasure of superiors, was pleased to translate it into elegant French, and print it in a very curious letter; and I hope it will not be unprofitable there, nor in Germany, where it is printed in Dutch."[m]

Dr. Bates tells us, in his funeral sermon for Baxter, that six brothers were at one time converted by this book. It has been translated into Welsh and Gælic, and most of the European languages; and Cotton Mather, in his life, mentions an Indian Prince who was so affected with it, that he kept reading it with tears till he died.

The nature of this subject naturally leads me to connect with the 'Call,' the next tract of this class, which we shall notice, though it did not immediately follow, 'NOW or NEVER;'[n] a discourse founded on Ecclesiastes ix. 10; and in which "the holy, serious, diligent believer is justified, encouraged, excited, and directed; and the opposers and neglecters convinced by the light of Scripture and reason." These tracts are so similar in character, style, and design, that I know not where the preference is due in point of excellence. They are both characterised by one strongly-marked feature—INTENSE EARNESTNESS—the earnestness of the author's deep convictions of the awfully-perilous condition of unconverted men. This was the result of the clear and powerful perceptions which he had of the present guilt and wretchedness, and the future loss and ruin of such persons. It is not the working up of mental excitement till it becomes passion; nor is it a laboured effort of human eloquence, which we admire in these treatises. Baxter was thinking of every thing rather than of the clothing of his thoughts, his words, or figures. He was thinking of the character and desert of a sinner, and intent only on arresting him before it might be too late. His object was to gain his attention, to convince his understanding,

[m] Life, part i. p. 115. [n] Works, vol. vii.

and to impress his heart. For this purpose he describes, he reasons, he expostulates, he threatens, he implores. He avails himself of every topic calculated to alarm or to allure. The character of God—the responsibility of man—the uncertainty of time—the misery of hell—the glory of heaven—are all brought forward and urged with an irresistible force of language, and in the tenderest appeals to the conscience and the heart.

Baxter's 'Call' stands advantageously contrasted with a treatise of a similar title, Law's 'Serious Call to a devout and holy Life.' I am far from thinking lightly of this work. It contains much important truth, and much serious and valuable admonition; but it wants what Baxter's treatises eminently possess, the simplicity of evangelical doctrine. Law was more of the school of Behmen than of Paul. He obscures and mystifies what Baxter represents in the simplest manner. Law's 'Call' is like the Egyptian taskmasters, who compelled the Israelites to make bricks without straw; it is an attempt to make men devout and holy without supplying sufficiently the means, by which alone, with divine influence, the effects can be produced. Baxter seeks to influence the mind and character entirely by those representations of evangelical truth, which must lie at the foundation of all comfortable and acceptable religion. The work of this celebrated mystic naturally tends to a species of self-righteous Pharisaism; the work of the Nonconformist, to make an humble, holy, and happy Christian.

The work of Baxter I cannot help thinking preferable to a similar production of one of his own brethren, Joseph Alleine's 'Alarm;' to which indeed Baxter writes a long preface, where he unites with the author in sounding the alarm to the unconverted. Alleine's tract is written in a style of almost unmitigated severity. There is a forbidding sternness in it. Full of "the terrors of the Lord," it is calculated to frighten rather than to persuade. Some of the topics also are not happily chosen, or discretely urged; yet it is a powerful appeal, and on some minds may be fitted to prepare the way for the consideration of the "mercies of the Lord." Baxter's 'Call' is adapted for more general usefulness. It breathes a softer and kindlier spirit, while it is no less pointed and faithful than the production of his friend and brother.

The next work, according to Baxter's own arrangement, which appeared, with a preface dated May 29, 1658, is his

'Directions and Persuasions to a sound Conversion' for prevention of that Deceit and Damnation of Souls, and of those Scandals, Heresies, and desperate Apostasies, that are the consequents of a Counterfeit and Superficial Change.'[o] "Having," he says, "in my 'Call to the Unconverted,' endeavoured to awaken careless souls, and persuade the obstinate to turn and live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some directions and persuasions to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that hypocrisy, which else they are like to be formed into; and the deceit of their hearts, the error of their lives, and the misery at their death, which are likely to follow. That they live not as those that flatter God with their mouths, and 'lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart is not right with him, neither are they steadfast in his covenant.' Lest, denying deep entertainment and rooting to the seed of life, or choking it by the radicated, predominant love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth: and lest, building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great: and so 'they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us.'"[p]

This work, through some mismanagement on the part of the bookseller, was at first published at too high a price, and, in consequence, had a less extensive circulation than some of Baxter's other books. It is well calculated to undeceive those who take it for granted that they have been the subjects of a divine change, when no such change has been effected. While great alarm is experienced, it is not so well fitted to be useful, as after the alarm has subsided, and the conscience begins to be satisfied, though the great change has not taken place. Baxter's directions for conversion are frequently so expressed, as if men could accomplish the change themselves; or as if they would do certain things with a view to their being converted. For instance, he says, "If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves, and all that you have, to God." Now, it is as plain as possible that only a converted person will make such a surrender as this. The same remark will apply to many other of his directions. No man, however, had a stronger conviction than he, that conversion is peculiarly the work of God. His views

[o] Works, vol. viii. [p] Ibid. Preface, p. v.

of its nature and consequences, as well as his general sentiments, afford the most satisfactory evidence, that this must have been the case. But he did not always sufficiently discriminate what belongs to God, from what falls within the province of man in the affairs of religion. He did not distinguish between *our* using all suitable means to convert men, and calling upon men to do certain things to convert themselves. Almost every thing he said, considered as an appeal to the understandings and the consciences of sinners, is strictly correct as means which God has appointed his servants to employ for the conversion of the world; but when put in the form of requesting sinners to perform certain acts with a view to God's converting them, the nature and tendency of the address are considerably altered. This gives to some of Baxter's preaching the aspect of a self-righteous system, in which the work of salvation is divided between God and man. But nothing could be further from his design. He meant, in fact, nothing more than is intended by those solemn appeals in which the prophets and apostles call upon men to repent, to turn, to be converted, to make to them new hearts and right spirits, that they may live and not die. This language is the voice of God to the sinner, sleeping in security, and dead in his sins; it is the moral means suited to the understanding, and appointed to induce consideration and repentance, which the divine Spirit brings to bear on the heart, while the heart receives the impression from which salvation and eternal life arise.

Next to this in order, though following after a considerable interval, is his 'Directions to the Converted for their Establishment, Growth, and Perseverance.'[q] It was preached in a lecture at Kidderminster in 1658, but was not published by Baxter till 1668. The dedication is an affecting address to his "Dearly Beloved, the Church at Kidderminster." In this letter he expresses great respect for them, and unabated confidence and affection. "The things which I especially loved in you," he says, "I will freely praise, which were a special measure of humility, a plain simplicity in religion, a freedom from common errors, a readiness to receive the truth, a catholic temper, without addictedness to any sect; a freedom from schism and separating ways, and a unity and unanimity in religion; a hatred and disowning of the usurpations, perturbations, and rebellions

[q] Works, vol. viii.

against the civil government, and an open bearing of your testimony in all these cases; together with seriousness in religion, and sober, righteous, charitable, and godly conversation. But yet, with all this, which is truly amiable, I know you have your frailties and imperfections. The weaker sort of Christians, either in knowledge or in holiness, to say nothing of the unsound, are the greater number in the best congregation that I ever yet knew. And what may be your case these eight years, since I have been separated from your presence, I cannot tell, though, through the mercy of God, I hear not of your declining. It is our sin which hath parted us asunder, let us lay the blame upon ourselves. I have now done expecting my ancient comforts in labouring among you any more. For these six years time, in which I thought my great experience had made me more capable of serving my Master better than before, his wisdom and justice have caused me to spend in grievous silence. And now my decays and disability of body are so much increased, that if I had leave, I have not strength, nor can ever reasonably expect it; therefore, once more I am glad to speak to you as I may, and shall be thankful, if authority will permit these instructions to come to your view, that the weak may have some more counsel and assistance. And if any shall miscarry, and disgrace religion, there may remain on record one more testimony, what doctrine it was that you were taught. The Lord be your teacher and your strength, and save you from yourselves, and from this present evil world, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ." [r]

He assigns another reason for its publication, beside that of its being the third part of his intended plan.

"The last sermon which I preached publicly, was at Blackfriars, on this text, Col. ii. 6, 7; and presently after there came forth a book called 'Farewell Sermons,' among which this of mine was one. Who did it, or to what end, I know not, nor doth it concern me to inquire. But I took it as an injury, both as it was done without my knowledge, and against my will, and to the offence of my superiors; and because it was taken by the notary so imperfectly, that much of it was nonsense: especially when some foreigners that lived in Poland, Hungary, and Helvetia, were earnest to buy this with the rest of my writings, I perceived how far the injury was likely to go, both against me and many others of my brethren. Therefore, finding since among the

[r] Works, vol. viii. p. 255.

relics of my scattered papers, this imperfect piece, which I had before written on that text, I was desirous to publish it, as for the benefit of weak Christians, so to right myself, and to cashier that farewell sermon." [s]

The second part of this treatise came out the following year, under the title of 'The Character of a sound, confirmed Christian; as also of a weak Christian, and of a seeming Christian.' [t] The preface to this is addressed to his friend, Henry Ashurst, Esq., and is dated from "his lodgings in New Prison, June 14, 1669." In reference to this work, he says, in his Life:

"The great weaknesses, passions, and injudiciousness, of many religious persons, and their ill effects; and especially perceiving that the temptations of the times, yea, the very reproofs of the Conformists did but increase these things among the separating party, caused me to offer a book to be licensed, called, 'Directions to weak Christians, how to grow in Grace,' with a second part, being 'Sixty Characters of a sound Christian, with as many of the weak Christian, and the Hypocrite'; which I the rather writ to imprint on men's minds a right apprehension of Christianity, and to be as a confession of our judgment in this malignant age, when some Conformists would make the world believe that it is some monstrous thing, composed of folly and sedition, which the Nonconformists mean by a Christian and a godly man. This book came forth when I was in prison, having been long before refused by Mr. Grigg." [u]

Of the reasons of this refusal by the bishop's chaplain, he gives the following account in another place. "This short treatise I offered to Mr. Thomas Grigg, the Bishop of London's chaplain, to be licensed for the press; a man who had but latley conformed, and who possessed special respect to me; but he utterly refused it, pretending that it savoured of discontent, and would be interpreted as against the bishops and the times. The matter was, that in several passages I spoke of the prosperity of the wicked, and the adversity of the godly; described hypocrites by their enmity to the godly, and their forsaking the truth for fear of suffering; and described the godly by their undergoing the enmity of the wicked world, and being steadfast, whatever it shall cost them. All this was interpreted as against the Church or Prelatists. I asked them whether they would not license that of mine, which they would no of another man's, against whom they had no displeasure; and he told me,

[s] Works, vol. viii. p. 258. [t] Ibid. vol. viii. [u] Life, part iii. p. 61.

no; because the words would receive their interpretation with the mind of the author. He asked me whether I did not myself think that Nonconformists would interpret it as against the times. I answered him, yes; I thought they would: and so they do all those passages of Scripture, which speak of persecution, and the sufferings of the godly; but I hoped Bibles should be licensed for all that. I asked him whether that was the rule which they went by, that they would license nothing of mine, which they thought any readers would interpret as against the bishops or their party. And when he told me plainly, that it was their rule or resolution, I took it for my final answer, and purposed never to offer him more: for I despaired of writing that which men would not interpret according to their own condition and opinion; especially against those whose crimes are notorious before the world. This made me think what a troublesome thing is guilt, which, as Seneca saith, is like a sore, which is pained not only with a little touch, but sometimes upon a conceit that it is touched. It maketh a man think that every briar is a serjeant to arrest him; or, with Cain, that every one who seeth him will kill him. A Cainite's heart and life, have usually the attendance of a Cainite's conscience. I did but try the licenser with this small, inconsiderable script, that I might know what to expect for my more valued writings; I then told him that I had troubled the world with so much already, and said enough for one man's part, that I could not think it very necessary to say any more to them; and therefore I should accept of his discharge. But fain they would have had my controversial writings, about universal redemption, predetermination, &c., in which my judgment is more pleasing to them; but I was unwilling to publish them alone, while the practical writings are refused. I give God thanks that I once saw times of greater liberty, though under an usurper; or else, as far as I can discern, scarce any of my books had ever seen the light." [x]

Having followed the order and connexion pointed out by Baxter himself, in his works relating to conversion and the unconverted, we must now depart from systematic arrangement to notice several important pieces which still belong to the same class of writing. I shall follow the order of time in which they appeared: 'The Mischiefs of self-ignorance, and the Benefits

[x] Life, part i. p. 123.

of self-acquaintance, opened in divers Sermons at St. Dunstan's, West.' 1661. 4to.[y] This volume is dedicated to Anne, Countess of Balcarras. Then follows an address to the people of Kidderminster, giving an account of the reasons why he was not allowed to preach in the diocese of Worcester, and which led to a controversy between him and Bishop Morley.

The subject of which he discourses, is one of great importance, and lies at the foundation of all proper knowledge and experience of the power of religion. It is founded on 1 Cor. xiii. 5, "Know ye not your own selves?" This treatise is probably less known to the reading public, than many of the practical works of Baxter, not because it is less valuable, but because it has not been regularly supplied in separate and successive editions. Its excellence consists not in doctrinally unfolding the economy of grace, or in directly pressing upon the reader the necessity of repentance towards God, or faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, but in tracing out the involutions of that most intricate economy of thought and feeling, judgment and action, moral liking and moral antipathy, which exists entire, and works apart in the bosom of every individual: and in this way it is powerfully subservient to repentance and faith, by disturbing the apathy, and combating the ignorant indifference, which so fatally shut them out from men's consciences and hearts. Its general scheme of thought is instructively arranged; and although its topics are numerous, they are not diffusely treated; while under each of them, there is a rich variety of illustrative matter, judiciously selected, and very aptly introduced. It is idle to say more of the manner of the writing, than that it is the manner of Richard Baxter; showing the writer in every page, but clear, concise, and simple, beyond several of his other pieces; while it is second to none of them in persuasive eloquence and impressive fervour, clothing thoughts which are not familiar, in very conspicuous language, and adapting itself, with uncommon felicity, to the inexperienced and the undisciplined. The whole style and spirit of the work are exactly suited to the nature of the subject; and we think it well entitled to a place among the few books which the parent selects for his child, or the pastor for the young of his flock, or the guardian for his pupil, as a means of awakening religious inquiry, and forming habits of early reflection.[z]

[y] Works, vol. xvi.

[z] A good edition of this work has recently been published by Collins, of

Of the Countess of Balcarras, to whom this work is dedicated and her husband, of whose piety the author speaks in terms of warm commendation, the following account will interest the reader:

"She was daughter to the late Earl of Seaforth in Scotland, towards the Highlands, and was married to the Earl of Balcarras, a covenanter, but an enemy to Cromwell's perfidiousness, and true to the person and authority of the king. With the Earl of Glencarne, he kept up the last war for the king against Cromwell; and his lady, through dearness of affection, marched with him, and lay out of doors with him on the mountains. At last, Cromwell drove them out of Scotland, and they went together beyond sea to the king, whom they long followed. He was taken for the head of the Presbyterians with the king; but, by evil instruments, he fell out with the lord chancellor, who, prevailing against him upon some advantage, he was for a time forbidden the court; the grief whereof, added to the distempers he had contracted by his warfare on the cold and hungry mountains, cast him into a consumption, of which he died. He was a lord of excellent learning, judgment, and honesty; none being praised equally with him for learning and understanding in all Scotland.

"When the Earl of Lauderdale (his near kinsman and great friend) was prisoner in Portsmouth and Windsor Castle, he fell into acquaintance with my books, and so valued them, that he read them all, and took notes of them, and earnestly commended them to the Earl of Balcarras, then with the king. The Earl met, at the first sight, with some passages where he thought I spake too favourably of the Papists, and differed from many other Protestants; so he cast them by, and sent the reason of his distaste to the Earl of Lauderdale, who pressed him but to read one of the books over; which he did, and then read them all, (as I have seen many of them marked with his hand,) and was drawn to overvalue them more than the Earl of Lauderdale. Hereupon his lady reading them also, and being a woman of very strong love and friendship, with extraordinary entireness swallowed up in her husband's love, she, for the books' sake, and her husband's sake, became a most affectionate friend to me before she ever saw me. While she was in France,

Glasgow, among the 'Select Christian Authors,' with an admirable introduction by my excellent friend the Rev. David Young, of Perth, from which the preceding paragraph has been taken.

being zealous for the king's restoration, (in whose cause her husband had pawned and ruined his estate,) by the Earl of Lauderdale's direction, she, with Sir Robert Murray, got divers letters from the pastors and others there to bear witness of the king's sincerity in the Protestant religion; among which there was one to me from Mr. Gaches. Her great wisdom, modesty, piety, and sincerity, made her accounted the saint at court. When she came over with the king, her extraordinary respect obliged me to be so often with her, as gave me acquaintance with her eminency in all the foresaid virtues. She was of solid understanding for her sex; of prudence, much more than ordinary; of great integrity and constancy in her religion; a great hater of hypocrisy; and faithful to Christ in an unfaithful world. She was somewhat over affectionate to her friends, which hath cost her a great deal of sorrow in the loss of her husband, and since of other special friends; and may cost her more, when the rest forsake her, as many in prosperity do to those that will not forsake their fidelity to Christ. Her eldest son, the young Earl of Balcarras, a very hopeful youth, died of a strange disease; two stones being found in his heart, of which one was very great. Being my constant auditor, and over-respectful friend, I had occasion for the just praises and acknowledgments which I have given her; which the occasioning of these books hath caused me to mention."[a]

The death of Lord Balcarras took place on the 30th of August, 1659. His eldest son, referred to above, died in 1662.[b] In the margin of the passage of Baxter's life, which I have extracted, Lady Balcarras is stated to have been afterwards married to the Earl of Argyle. Whether this note is Baxter's or Sylvester's, I am unable to say, nor can I vouch for its accuracy. She must in that case have been second wife to the unfortunate Argyle, who lost his life, as his father also had done, on a charge of high treason, at the Market Cross of Edinburgh, on the 30th of June, 1685.

In his letter to the inhabitants of Kidderminster, prefixed to this volume, Baxter gives a short account of the Savoy Conference, and hints that something he had said there, with which Dr. Morley, the bishop of Winchester, was exceedingly offended, was the cause of the bishop's refusing to allow him to preach again at Kidderminster, or anywhere in his diocese. "At the conclusion of this conference," he says, "those of the other part formed an

[a] Life, part i. p. 121.

[b] 'Burke's Peerage,' p. 43.

argument, whose major proposition was to this sense: 'Whatsoever book enjoineth nothing but what is of itself lawful, and by lawful authority, enjoineth nothing that is sinful.' We denied this proposition, and at last gave divers reasons of our denial; among which, one was, 'It may be unlawful by accident, and, therefore, sinful.' You know my crime, it is my concurring with learned, reverend brethren, to give this reason of our denial of a proposition; yet they are not forbidden to preach, only I."

The bishop took fire at this statement with one or two other allusions to himself, and published shortly after 'A Letter to a Friend, in vindication of himself from Mr. Baxter's calumny.' In this letter, his lordship denies that Baxter ever had a right to be minister of Kidderminster; accuses him of having robbed and injured the lawful vicar; represents him to the people of Kidderminster as a very improper person to have the charge of them, and accuses him of holding various "maxims of treason, sedition, and rebellion, and as guilty of certain mis-statements." In proof of this he introduces the testimony of Dr. Gunning and Dr. Pearson; and concludes by making an appeal, "whether a man of this judgment and of these affections ought to be permitted to preach?"

"When the bishop's invective was read," Baxter says, "many men were of many minds about the answering of it: those at a distance all cried out upon me to answer; those at hand did all dissuade me, and told me that it would be imprisonment at least to me, if I did it with the greatest truth and mildness possible. Both gentlemen and all the city ministers told me, that it would not do half so much good as my suffering would do hurt; that none believed it but the engaged party; that to others an answer was not necessary, and would be unprofitable, for they would never read it. I thought that the judgment of men that were upon the place, and knew how things went, was most to be regarded. But yet I wrote a full answer to his book, except about the words in my 'Holy Commonwealth,' which were not to be spoken to, and kept it by me, that I might use it as there was occasion. At that time, Mr. Joseph Glanvil sent me the offer of his service, to write in my defence, but I dissuaded him from bringing himself into suffering, and making himself unserviceable, for so low an end: only I gave him, and no man else, my own answer to peruse, which he returned with his approbation of it.

"But Mr. Edward Bagshaw (son to Mr. Bagshaw, the lawyer, that wrote 'Mr. Bolton's Life') without my knowledge wrote a book in answer to the bishop's. I could have wished he had let it alone; for the man hath no great disputing faculty, but only a florid, epistolary style, and was wholly a stranger to me and to the matters of fact, and, therefore, could say nothing to them: but only being of a bold and Roman spirit, he thought that no suffering should deter a man from the smallest duty, or cause him to silence any useful truth. And I had formerly seen a Latin discourse of his against monarchy, which no whit pleased me, being a weak argumentation for a bad cause."[c]

Glanvil's letters, offering to write in Baxter's defence against Dr. Morley, still remain. They are full of commendation of Baxter's character, and of the success with which he had met the bishop's charges. "Methinks," he says, "'tis a great pity but the world should be disabused, and that your right reverend libeller should be made ashamed, of his misreports and slanderous falsifications." He advises Baxter, by all means to publish, as, till his defence appeared, "the reverend father's lies will be taken for irreproveable truths."[d] This language is abundantly plain from a son of the church towards one of her reverend prelates; and it is certainly more illustrative of his attachment to Baxter, than of his respect for the episcopal hierarchy.

Though Baxter suppressed his answer to the bishop's letter, he took notice of it in the epistolary preface to his 'True and Only Way of Concord,' published in 1680, which he addressed to Bishops Morley and Gunning, whom he considered the chief instruments in defeating the design of the Savoy Conference. In some other of his controversial pieces, Baxter also alludes to the bishop's conduct.

That the bishop felt an impression had been made against him by Baxter's publications, is very evident; for at the distance of twenty years from the original discussion, when in the eighty-fifth year of his age, he published a quarto volume of more than five hundred pages, 'The Bishop of Winchester's Vindication of himself from divers false, scandalous, and injurious Reflections, made upon him by Mr. Richard Baxter in several of his writings.' 1683. In this large volume, the bishop reprints the 'Letter to a Friend,' already noticed, and then in his Vindication, proceeds to support his charges against Baxter, the propriety of his conduct in silencing him, and of his own behaviour

[c] Life, part ii. p. 378. [d] Baxter MSS.

at the Savoy Conference. The whole is r ixed up with the bishop's political and high-church sentiments, which were as little in accordance with the principles of the British constitution, as with the spirit of the New Testament. Baxter wrote no formal answer to this work; but in reference to it, he says: "Bishop Morley was accounted one of the most eminent of the clergy, for parts and orthodoxy. One book against me, called his Letter, is most shameless for untruths in public matters of fact. His last and greatest is to prove against me, that the parliament hath no part in legislative power, nor the whole kingdom any right of self-defence against any commissioned by the king on any pretence whatsoever. This accuser is an eminent member of the best church in the world. Is this bundle of gross untruths a proof that he is one of the best men in the world? He saith that 'the good that I wrote was for mischievous ends.' But what should move a man, in pain and expectation of speedy death, to write above six score books, great and small, that are contrary to the bent of his own heart? And, for that which he would mischievously overthrow to spend his life against his own affections?"[e]

Having finished this digression on the controversy with Bishop Morley, we return to the class of books which is the proper subject of this chapter.

The next work which flowed from the pen of our untiring writer, in this class, bears a very singular and perhaps objectionable title, 'A SAINT or a BRUTE. The certain necessity and excellency of holiness, so plainly proved, and urgently applied, as by the blessing of God may convince and save the miserable, impenitent, ungodly sensualists, if they will not let the devil hinder them from a sober and serious reading.' 1662. 4to.[f]

[e] 'Penitent Confession,' p. 65. The controversy between Morley and Baxter appears to have been taken up very hotly by several persons on both sides. It occasioned—Hypocrisy Unveiled, in a Letter to Mr. Baxter, 1662—A Letter to a Person of Honour, containing some Animadversions on the Bishop of Worcester's Letter to Mr. Baxter, 1662—A Second Letter on the same subject, 1662—A Letter, with some Animadversions on the Animadverter, on the Bishop of Worcester's Letter, by J. C., M. D. 1662—D. E. Defeated; or, a Reply to a late scurrilous Pamphlet against the Bishop of Worcester's Letter, 1662—Reflections upon the Animadversions upon the Bishop of Worcester's Letter, by H. G. 1662—Vindication of the Bishop of Worcester's Letter touching Mr. Baxter, from the Animadversions of D. E. 1662. Behold how great a fire a little matter kindleth!

[f] Works, vol. x.

From the dedication to his flock at Kidderminster, and his late hearers in London, I cannot avoid quoting a paragraph or two, beautifully written:

"Once more, through the great mercy of God, I have liberty to send you a preacher for your private families, which may speak to you when I cannot, and when I lie silent in the dust. I take it for no small mercy, that I have been so much employed about the great and necessary things, in despite of all the malice of Satan, who would have entangled me, and taken up my time in personal vindications and barren controversies.

"I was also, when I first intended writing, under another temptation: being of their mind who thought that nothing should be made public but what a man had first laid out his most choice art upon, I thought to have acquainted the world with nothing but what was the work of time and diligence; but my conscience soon told me that there was too much of pride and selfishness in this, and that humility and self-denial required me to lay by the affectation of that style, and spare that industry which tended but to advance my name with men, when it hindered the main work, and crossed my end. Providence, drawing forth some popular unpolished discourses, and giving them success beyond my expectation, did thereby rebuke my selfish thoughts, and satisfy me that the truths of God do perform their work more by their divine authority, and proper evidence, and material excellency, than by any ornaments of fleshly wisdom. And, as Seneca saith, though I will not despise an eloquent physician, yet will I not think myself much the happier for his adding eloquence to his healing art. Being encouraged, then, by reason and experience, I venture these popular sermons into the world, and especially for the use of you, my late auditors, that heard them. I bless God that when more worthy labourers are fain to weep over their obstinate, unprofitable, unthankful people, and some are driven away by their injuries, and put to shake off the dust of their feet against them; I am rather forced to weep over my own unthankful heart, that did not sufficiently value the mercy of a faithful flock, who parted with me rather as the Ephesians with Paul, and who have lived according to the plain and necessary doctrine which they had received. Among whom, Papists, who persuade men that our doctrine tendeth to divisions, can find no divisions or sects; who have constantly disowned both the ambitious usurpations which have shaken the kingdom, and the

factions, censoriousness, and civil violence in the church, which pride hath generated and nourished in this trying age. Among whom, I have enjoyed so very large a proportion of mercy, in the liberty of so long an exercise of my ministry, with so universal advantage and success, that I must be disingenuously unthankful if I should murmur and crepine at the present restraining hand of God. But I must say with David; 'If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me the ark and habitation.' There, or elsewhere, use me in his service. But if he say, 'I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as it seemeth good unto him.' "[g]

It was not the pleasure of God that Baxter should resume his labours in the place which occupied so much of his heart and of his thoughts. Painful as he felt this trial to be, he learned to submit to it in quietness and patience, and no doubt found that it was among the things which worked together for his good.

The most objectionable part of this work is its title, which presents a more offensive aspect to the reader than is desirable, or than the nature of the subject warrants. The great object of it is to convince men "that holiness is the most pleasant way; that the godly choose the better part, and that the ungodly sensualists live as brutes, while they unreasonably refuse to live as saints." The treatise is founded on Luke xi. 41, 42, and, like many other of his practical writings, is the substance of the discourses which he delivered from the pulpit. Part of it relates to the deistical controversy, and is recommended by himself to be read in connexion with the second part of his 'Saint's Rest,' and the 'Treatise against Infidelity.' Many of his statements are strong and pointed, and though the argument is maintained in a very discursive manner, it is prosecuted with his characteristic ability.

The other and smaller performances in this class I shall group together; as none of them require a distinct notice. The titles in general, sufficiently explain their nature and design. They were all the substance of sermons preached in different places, though published rather in the form of tracts, or treatises, than sermons.

'Making Light of Christ and Salvation,' preached at St. Lawrence Jewry, London.[h] 'The One Thing Necessary; or,

[g] Works, vol. x. pp. 3—5. [h] Ibid. vol. xvi.

Christ's Justification of Mary's Choice.' 1684.[j] 'Cain and Abel Malignity; or, Enmity to serious Godliness, lamented, described, detected,' &c. 1689.[k] This treatise is partly designed to expose the evil of enmity to serious godliness, as the root of all persecution. Preface to Alleine's 'Alarm.' 'A Sermon of Judgment,' preached at St. Paul's, before the lord mayor and aldermen of London, Dec. 17, 1654.[l] 'Redemption of Time.'[m]

Baxter mentions some circumstances respecting two of these sermons, which illustrate his popularity as a preacher, and are therefore worth the recording. "When I returned home, I was solicited by letters to print many of the sermons which I had preached in London; and in some of them I gratified their desires. One sermon which I published, was against men's making light of Christ, upon Matt. xxii. 5. This sermon was preached at St. Lawrence Jewry, where Mr. Vines was pastor; where, though I sent the day before to secure room for the Lord Broghill and the Earl of Suffolk, with whom I was to go in the coach; yet when I came, the crowd had so little respect to persons, that they were fain to go home again, because they would not come within hearing. The old Earl of Warwick, who stood in the lobby, brought me home again; and Mr. Vines himself was fain to get up into the pulpit and sit behind me, and I stood between his legs; which I mention, that the reader may understand that verse in my poem concerning him, which is printed, where I say that,

'At once one pulpit held us both.'

"Another of those sermons which I published, was a sermon of judgment, which I enlarged into a small treatise. This was preached at St. Paul's at the desire of Sir Christopher Pack, then lord mayor, to the greatest auditory that ever I saw."[n]

It is impossible to survey the class of writings which we have thus briefly brought under review, without admiring the goodness and wisdom of God, in raising up a man capable of producing them. With all the imperfections belonging to them as human performances, written often in haste, and amidst the distractions of a period of great affliction and agitation, where shall we find, in the wide range of human literature, so large a portion of powerful and heart-stirring appeal? They comprise deeply interesting and comprehensive views of the guilt and

[j] Works, vol. x. [k] Ibid. [l] Ibid. [m] Ibid.
[n] Life, part i. pp. 111, 112.

misery of man, and the divine provision of mercy through a Saviour; of the awful punishment which awaits the wicked, and of the immortal blessedness provided for the righteous. These topics are interwoven, in general, with great address, with every thing that is tender in entreaty, solemn in warning, and faithful in reproof and expostulation. Baxter appeals not to the passions only, but to the judgment. His aim is to convince the understanding, as well as to subdue the heart. He calculated on no impressions being lasting or useful, but those which were produced by enlightened views of truth and error, holiness and sin, time and eternity. He dealt not in noisy and vapid declamation; but in sound and persuasive argument. He felt the goodness of his cause, and the weight of the reasons which he could adduce in its support, and with a giant's strength, and an angel's earnestness, he urged the subject home on every man's bosom and business.

It will probably be remarked, that in these discourses there is a larger portion of the Law than of the Gospel; and that they are more calculated to operate on the fears than on the hopes of men. While I admit this to be true, I doubt whether it ought to be regarded as a fault. The object of the author is to awaken and convince; he therefore went, what he considered to be, the straightforward road to it. He did not conceal the promises of the Gospel, but they did not constitute the chief topics of his preaching to men whom he wished to rouse. Judging by the success attending his labours, which arose, there is reason to believe, from the great plainness and fidelity with which he warned men, instead of censuring, it would be well to imitate the style of his preaching.

He was never afraid of carrying the warmth and energy of his appeals too far. He often complains of his own coldness, but never of the excess of his zeal. The charge of fanaticism gave him no concern. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he cared nothing for the displeasure or the frown of men, but made it his grand concern to be found faithful. To win souls was his object; the gaining of them was his reward. Nor did he lose his aim. If few men have laboured harder, or under greater bodily suffering, or more severe reproach, few, indeed, have enjoyed a richer reward. In the many fruits of his labours, he could exult even while on earth; they now constitute his crown of rejoicing in heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

Introductory Remarks—'Right Method for settled Peace of Conscience'—Colonel Bridges—'The Crucifying of the World'—Thomas Foley, Esq.—'Treatise on Self-Denial'—'Obedient Patience'—'Life of Faith'—'Knowledge and Love compared'—Sir Henry and Lady Diana Ashurst—'God's Goodness Vindicated'—Various Discourses—'Cure of Melancholy'—Baxter's Experience among Persons thus afflicted—Conclusion.

If the works noticed in the preceding chapter, show how admirably qualified Baxter was for dealing with the unconverted, and how powerfully and successfully he directed his energies to benefit them, the present chapter will bring before the reader, a class of books which equally illustrates his capacity for instructing and edifying Christians, and shows that this branch of the Christian ministry was cultivated by him no less than the former.

When a sinner has been converted from the error of his ways, only the first step has been taken towards the kingdom of heaven. His knowledge probably extends but to the merest elements of religion; or to those first truths, which as they are the simplest, so are they the most powerfully calculated to interest the understanding, and engage the affections. His perceptions of the extent of his wretchedness and danger, and of the divine suitableness of Heaven's plan of recovery, comprehend, perhaps, all that is true, and yet embrace but a narrow range. As he becomes familiar with these, he perceives their connexion with other subjects, more difficult and complex. His mind requires fresh excitement to counteract its natural bias, to prevent its return to former pursuits and habits, and to carry it on in the new course into which it has been led.

But new discoveries of truth, and of the way of righteousness, are not the only discoveries which a man comes to make in the

progress of Christianity. He makes discoveries of the depravity and deceitfulness of his heart, for which he was not at first, perhaps, at all prepared; which astound and perplex him, lead him to question his own sincerity, the reality of the change which he supposes had taken place in his mind; and thus bring him into deep distress. His conscience is wounded, his spirits are depressed, and his confidence in the adaptation of the Gospel remedy, or in his right to use it, is very considerably abated.

Much skill is required in the treatment of persons in this state. Severity or tenderness, when unduly or improperly exercised, may be almost equally injurious. The one may create despondency and desperation; the other may soothe and quiet a wound without healing it. In some cases it is necessary to apply a sedative, in others a stimulus. The sensibility of some is quicker than their understandings; the judgment of such must be informed. In other cases the mind is sufficiently enlightened, but the conscience is not properly under its guidance; the moral faculties of such must be the chief object of attention. Some instructors, like quacks in medicine, have a spiritual panacea for every case. This they apply without judgment or discrimination, healing some, and killing others; but in both the professions, while the cures are magnified and blazoned, we hear as little as possible of the deaths which are inflicted.

Christianity is perfectly adapted to all the diversified forms of evil which can or do occur among men. If it were not, it would not be what the Scriptures represent it—the fruit of Jehovah's highest wisdom, the profoundest display of his goodness to creatures; and therefore worthy of the reception of every human being to whom it is addressed. Hence the great business of the Christian ministry, in relation to believers, is, to unfold the various parts of this infinitely wise and beneficent scheme; to obviate the difficulties arising from their imperfect acquaintance with it; to illustrate the relative connexion and harmony of its various principles, and the holy tendency and design of all its provisions and enactments.

By many ill-informed persons, who make a profession of religion, a kind of nausea is felt, when the subject of Christian experience is mentioned. It is instantly regarded as the cant of a party, or as something akin to fanaticism. At all events it is set down as what belongs only to the weaker portion of the religious community, or is charitably ascribed to an oversensitive conscience, or the undue cultivation of a spirituality

which is not adapted to present circumstances. The subject is therefore discarded, as unworthy of attention from men of more enlarged and cultivated minds.

It is readily granted that the subject has been abused; that a phraseology has been employed in treating it both disgusting and absurd; that it has been substituted in the place of the higher morals of religion, and treated as if it were compatible with outward carelessness and even gross misconduct. Still it would be as foolish to deny the existence of what is commonly called Christian experience, as to deny that individuals who are under a process of cure or healing, have any consciousness of the effects which are produced by the medicines that are prescribed to them. If the Gospel is destined and fitted to act as a remedy, there must be a sensible experience to correspond with it. There must be a consciousness of the effects if the truth has exerted a searching power on the conscience, a healing influence on the heart, and a transforming operation on the whole character. If it has infused a new principle of life into the soul, giving a new tone and direction to its thoughts and pursuits, and surrounding it by a healthier and holier atmosphere than it ever before breathed, there must be some knowledge of all this. As the process of divine influence advances or retrogrades; as it experiences checks from within, or counteractions from without; as there is a vigorous and persevering co-operation on our part with God's revealed purposes and plans, or a state of inactivity or positive resistance, so will the work of salvation be advancing or receding. Now all this makes up what we understand by religious experience, or the Christian life, to cultivate which both the ministry and writings of Baxter were devoted.

The first work on this subject which he published is, his 'Right Method for Settled Peace of Conscience and Spiritual Comfort.' [1] 1653. 12mo. This was the fourth of Baxter's publications, and was occasioned, chiefly, by the lady of Colonel John Bridges, for whose benefit, in the first instance, it was composed and printed. He accordingly dedicates it to Colonel and Mrs. Bridges, and to Mr. and Mrs. Foley, all of whom were persons in opulent circumstances, who belonged to his congregation at Kidderminster. "Though one only," he says, "had the original interest in these papers, I now direct them to you all, as not

[1] Works, vol. ix.

knowing how, in this, to separate you. You dwell together in my estimation and affection: one of you a member of the church which I must teach, and, legally, the patron of its maintenance and minister; the other, a special branch of that family, to which I was first indebted in this county. You lately joined in presenting to the parliament the petition of this county for the Gospel and a faithful ministry. When I only told you of my intention of sending some poor scholars to the University, you freely and jointly offered your considerable annual allowance thereto, and that for the continuance of my life, or their necessities there. I will tell the world of this, whether you will or not; not for your applause, but for their imitation, and the shame of many who will not be drawn to do the like." [p]

Colonel Bridges, then patron of the parish of Kidderminster, was the long and tried friend of Baxter, and one who made a considerable figure during the Commonwealth. He had the command of a regiment in Ireland immediately before the Restoration, and, by a dexterous manœuvre, got possession of Dublin Castle, without bloodshed; of which he published a short narrative. "Had it not been for that action," says Baxter, "it is probable that Ireland would have been the refuge and rendezvous for the disbanded or fugitive army, and that there they would not only have maintained the war, but have embodied against England, and come over again, with resolutions heightened by their warnings. The reward that Colonel Bridges had for this service was the peaceful testimony of his conscience, and a narrow escape from being utterly ruined; being sued in an action of fourscore thousand pound; as one that, after Edghill fight, had taken the king's goods, which was proved false, and he, being cleared by the court, did quickly after die of a fever, at Chester, and go to a more peaceable and desirable world." [q]

"Mrs. Bridges," Baxter informs us, "was often weeping out her doubts to him, about her long and great uncertainty of her true sanctification and salvation. He told her that a few hasty words were not direction enough for the satisfactory resolving of so great a case; and that he would, therefore, lay her down a few of those necessary directions, which she should read and study, and get well imprinted on her mind." When he had begun it, he found he could not make it so brief as he had expected, and judging that it might be useful to others as well as to the lady who occasioned it, he enlarged it, to meet other cases beside hers. [r]

[p] Epistle Dedicatory, Works, vol. ix. [q] Life, part i. p. 106. [r] Ibid. p. 109.

The small tract, originally designed to be but "one sheet of paper," thus swelled out into a little volume, containing "Thirty-two Directions" for the attainment or the preservation of the important blessing—peace of mind. The Puritans and Nonconformists may be said to have excelled in the class of books to which this work belongs. Sibbs's 'Bruised Reed, and Soul's Conflict;' Symond's 'Deserted Soul's Case and Cure;' the works of Preston, Perkins, Ball, and Culverwell, on similar topics, were all prior to this of Baxter's; but cannot be regarded as superseding it. It is better written than most of its predecessors of the same class, and is, on the whole, well calculated to answer the purpose for which it was intended. The directions are, indeed, sufficiently numerous, and some of them quite as much calculated to entangle and perplex as to assist. He found, he informs us, respecting it,

"This book pleased Dr. Hammond well, and many rational persons, and some of those for whom it was written; but the women and weaker sort, I found, could not so well improve clear reason as they can a few comfortable, warm, and pretty sentences. It is style, and not reason, which doth most with them. Some of the divines were angry with it, for a passage or two about perseverance; because I had said that many men are certain of their present sanctification, who are not certain of their perseverance and salvation, meaning all the godly that are assured of their sanctification, and yet do not hold the certainty of perseverance. But a great storm of jealousy and censure was, by this, and some such words, raised against me by many good men, who lay more on their opinions and party than they ought; therefore, as some would have had me to retract it, and others to leave it out of the next impression, I did the latter." [s]

From a Dedication to the Poor in Spirit, which is prefixed to this work, I extract an admirably descriptive passage of the Antinomians of that period. It is equally applicable still. "One thing more, I confess, did much prevail with me to make these papers public, and that is, the Antinomians' common, confident obtrusion of their anti-evangelical doctrines and methods for comforting troubled souls. They are the most notorious mountebanks in this art, the highest pretenders, and most unhappy performers, that most of the reformed churches ever knew. And none, usually, are more ready to receive their doctrines than such weak women or unskilful people, that, being in

[s] Life, part i. pp. 109, 110.

trouble, are like a sick man in great pain, who is glad to hear what all can say, and to make trial of every thing by which he hath any hope of ease. Then there is so much opium in these mountebanks' nepenthes, or antidote of rest; so many principles of carnal security and presumption, which tend to the present ease of the patient, whatever follows, that it is no wonder if some well-meaning Christians do quickly swallow the bait, and proclaim the rare effects of this medicament, and the admirable skill of this unskilful sect, to the ensnaring of others, especially that are in the like distress."[t]

In 1658, he published 'The Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ,'[u] a treatise in quarto, the substance of which had originally been delivered as an assize sermon, which was preached at Worcester, when Thomas Foley, esq., was high sheriff of the county. To that gentleman it is accordingly dedicated. He was a man of distinguished piety and benevolence, and the devoted friend of Baxter. From very moderate circumstances, his father, Richard Foley, and he, rose, by means of iron works in the county of Worcester, to the possession of an estate of five thousand pounds per annum—an immense sum in those days. He necessarily acquired the patronage of several livings on his extensive property, to which he invariably presented worthy and useful ministers. Kidderminster fell into his hands after Baxter had left it, having been purchased from Colonel Bridges, and to which he would gladly have presented Baxter, had he been capable of accepting it. Baxter's 'Dedication' is commendatory, but faithful. It is worthy of the grateful friend, but not less of the conscientious servant of Christ. Richard Foley, the founder of the family, and the early patron of Baxter, died in 1657. He endowed a school at Stourbridge, with five hundred pounds per annum. His great grandson was raised to the peerage by Queen Anne, in 1711, by the title of Baron Foley of Kidderminster, from whom the present noble family of that name has descended.[v] After the dedication is a long preface 'To the Nobility, Gentry, and all that have the riches of this World,' in which Baxter addresses them with great fidelity respecting their easily-besetting sins, warns them of the danger of trusting in their external advantages, and endeavours to excite them to the performance of good works.[x]

[t] Works, vol. ix. p. 61. [u] Works, vol. ix. [v] Burke's 'Peerage,' art. Foley.
[x] Among his other recommendations is one to landlords, "to engage their

The discourse itself, which is founded on Gal. vi. 14, brings the grand subject of Christianity, with its inseparable, practical influence, powerfully before the reader. While it preserves the style of address throughout, it is much more of a treatise than a sermon, having been greatly enlarged, in every part, after its delivery. He first discusses, negatively, what it is not, and then, positively, what it is to have the world crucified to us, and to be crucified to the world. He next shows how this is effected by the cross of Christ. He then assigns various reasons, to show that this is so, and why it must be so. In conclusion, he applies the first part of the doctrine of the text, by showing that, for the reasons assigned, believers must glory in the cross of Christ, abhorring the glorying of worldly men.

While the doctrine of salvation, through the sacrifice of Christ, is clearly enough stated in the discourse, it is not the prominent or leading topic of it. In this respect, it differs widely from the celebrated sermon of Maclaurin, on the same text and subject. In that beautiful production, the work of the Redeemer on the cross, is set forth as the highest manifestation of the love and wisdom of God, with a power of illustration and a felicity of expression which have never been exceeded. In the discourse of Baxter, the effects of this doctrine in withdrawing men from the love and enjoyment of the world, and in fixing the heart on the sublimer and holier enjoyments of religion, are the grand topics; and they are treated with the hand of a master. All the empty glare and noisome pollution of the world were known to Baxter. Into the dark chambers of the human heart he pours the light of day, exhibiting all its guiltiness and pollution, and exposing the inadequacy of all that the world can supply to satisfy its "immortal longings."

How admirably does he expose the vain show of man's bustling life! "It is but like children's games, where all is done in jest, and which wise men account not worthy their observance. It is but like the acting of a comedy, where great persons and actions are personated and counterfeited; and a pompous stir there is for a while, to please the foolish spectators, that themselves may be pleased by their applause, and then they come down, and the sport is ended, and they are as

tenants in their leases to learn a catechism, and read the Scriptures, and be once a year accountable to their minister for their profiting." His recommendations about the distribution of religious books and tracts, and visiting the poor and the sick were more likely to be attended to.

they were. It is but like a puppet play, where there is great doings to little purpose; or like the busy gadding of the laborious ants, to gather together a little sticks and straw, which the spurn of man's foot will soon disperse."

With what beauty does he describe the emptiness of the world; and with what earnestness does he expostulate with men on the folly of preferring it to the better enjoyments of God! "What! shall we prefer a mole-hill before a kingdom? A shadow before the substance? An hour before eternity? Nothing before all things? Vanity and vexation before felicity? —The cross of Christ hath set up such a sun as quite darkeneth the light of worldly glory. Though earth were something, if there were no better to be had, it is nothing when heaven standeth by."

I know none of the writings of Baxter which contains passages of greater power, or more impressive eloquence, than this. The solemnity of the circumstances in which the discourse was delivered, appears to have affected him, and increased even his accustomed earnestness. I cannot make many quotations, but let the reader imagine, if he can, the effect of the following passage, addressed to the court:

"Honourable, worshipful, and all well-beloved, it is a weighty employment that occasioneth your meeting here to-day. The estates and lives of men are in your hands. But it is another kind of judgment which you are all hastening towards: when judges and juries, the accusers and accused, must all appear upon equal terms, for the final decision of a far greater cause. The case that is then and there to be determined, is not whether you shall have lands or no lands, life or no life (in our natural sense); but whether you shall have heaven or hell, salvation or damnation, an endless life of glory with God and the Redeemer, and the angels of heaven, or an endless life of torment with devils and ungodly men. As sure as you now sit on those seats, you shall shortly all appear before the Judge of all the world, and there receive an irreversible sentence, to an unchangeable state of happiness or misery. This is the great business that should presently call up your most serious thoughts, and set all the powers of your souls on work for the most effectual preparation; that if you are men, you may quit yourselves like men, for the preventing of that dreadful doom which unprepared souls must there expect. The greatest of your secular affairs are but dreams and toys to this. Were you at every assize to determine

causes of no lower value than the crowns and kingdoms of the monarchs of the earth, it were but as children's games to this. If any man of you believe not this, he is worse than the devil that tempteth him to unbelief; and let him know that unbelief is no prevention, nor will put off the day, or hinder his appearance; but ascertain his condemnation at that appearance.

"He that knows the law and the fact, may know before your assize, what will become of every prisoner, if the proceedings be all just, as in our case they will certainly be. Christ will judge according to his laws; know therefore whom the law condemneth or justifieth, and you may know whom Christ will condemn or justify. And seeing all this is so, doth it not concern us all to make a speedy trial of ourselves in preparation to this final trial? I shall for your own sakes therefore, take the boldness, as the officer of Christ, to summon you to appear before yourselves, and keep an assize this day in your own souls, and answer at the bar of conscience, to what shall be charged upon you. Fear not the trial; for it is not conclusive, final, or a peremptory irreversible sentence that must now pass. Yet slight it not; for it is a necessary preparative to that which is final and irreversible. Consequentially, it may prove a justifying accusation, an absolving condemnation, and if you proceed to execution, a saving, quickening death, which I am now persuading you to undergo. The whole world is divided into two sorts of men: one that love God above all, and live for him; and the other that love the flesh and world above all, and live to them. One that seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; another that seek first the things of this life. One that mind and savour the things of the flesh and of man; the other that mind and savour most the things of the Spirit and of God. One that account all things dung and dross that they may win Christ; another that make light of Christ in comparison of their business, and riches, and pleasures in the world. One that live by sight and sense upon present things, another that live by faith upon things invisible. One that have their conversation in heaven, and live as strangers upon earth; another that mind earthly things, and are strangers to heaven. One that have in resolution forsaken all for Christ, and the hopes of a treasure in heaven; another that resolve to keep somewhat here, though they venture and forsake the heavenly reward, and will go away sorrowful that they cannot have both. One that being born of the flesh is but flesh; the other that

being born of the Spirit is spirit. One that live as without God in the world; the other that live as without the seducing world in God, and in and by the subservient world to God. One that have ordinances and means of grace, as if they had none; the other that have houses, lands, wives, as if they had none. One that believe as if they believed not, and love God as if they loved him not, and pray as if they prayed not, as if the fruit of these were but a shadow: the other that weep, as if they wept not, for worldly things, and rejoice as if they rejoiced not. One that have Christ as not possessing him, and use him and his name as but abusing them; the other that buy as if they possessed not, and use the world as not abusing it. One that draw near to God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him; the other that corporally converse with the world, when their hearts are far from it. One that serve God who is a Spirit, with carnal service, and not in spirit and truth; the other that use the world itself spiritually, and not in a carnal worldly manner. In a word, one sort are children of this world; the other are the children of the world to come, and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. One sort have their portion in this life; and the other have God for their portion. One sort have their good things in this life-time, and their reward here; the other have their evil things in this life, and live in hope of the everlasting reward."[y]

The next work that occurs in this class, is his 'Treatise on Self-Denial,' which was first published in 1659. "Being greatly apprehensive," he says, "of the commonness and danger of the sin of selfishness, as the sum and root of all positive evil, I preached many sermons against it, and, at the request of some friends, I published them in this treatise, which found better acceptance than most of my other books, but yet prevented not the ruin of church and state, and millions of souls, by that sin."[z]

To understand the allusion in this sentence, the reader must remember that the work was published shortly before the Restoration. Prefixed to it, is a long letter addressed to Colonel James Berry, one of the council of state." Of Berry, we have had occasion to speak in a former part of this work. He was one of the earliest friends of Baxter, in whose religious character he had placed great confidence; but, of whom, he afterwards greatly altered his opinion. Whether he was justified

[y] Works, vol. ix. pp. 431—433. [z] Life, part i. p. 117.

in altering his opinion of Berry, belongs not to our present subject; but in this letter there is some admirable admonition on the danger of worldly greatness, by which Baxter was afraid the colonel had been injured.

"Self is the strongest and most dangerous enemy that ever you fought against. It is a whole army united; and the more dangerous, because so near. Many that have fought as valiantly and successfully against other enemies as you, have, at last, been conquered and undone by self. Conquer it you cannot, without a conflict; and the conflict must endure as long as you live. Combating is not pleasing to the enemy; and, therefore, as long as self is the enemy, and self-pleasing is natural to corrupted man (that should be wholly addicted to please the Lord), self-denial will prove a difficult task; and if somewhat in the advice that would engage you deeper in the conflict should seem bitter or ungrateful, I should not wonder. And let me freely tell you, that your prosperity and advancement will make the work so exceedingly difficult, that, since you have been a major-general and a lord, and now a counsellor of state, you have stood in a more slippery, perilous place, and have need of much more grace and vigilancy than when you were but Baxter's friend.

"I sleep most sweetly when I have travelled in the cold. Frost and snow are friends to the seed, though they are enemies to the flower. Adversity, indeed, is contrary to glory; but it befriendeth grace. Plutarch tells us, that, when Cæsar passed by a smoky, nasty village at the foot of the Alps, some of his commanders merrily asked him whether there was such a stir for commands, and dignities, and honours, among those cottages, as there was at Rome. The answer is easy. Do you not think that an Anthony, a Mark, a Jerome, or such other of the ancient, retired Christians, were wiser and happier men than a Nero or a Caligula; yea, or a Julius Cæsar? Is it a desirable thing to be a lord, or ruler, before we turn to common earth; and, as Marius, that was made emperor one day, reigned the next, and was slain by a soldier the next; so to be worshipped to-day, and laid in the dust, if not in hell, to-morrow? It was the saying of the Emperor Severus, 'Omnia fui, sed nihil expedit;' and of King David, 'I have seen an end of all perfection.' O, value these things but as they deserve! Speak impartially; are not those that are striving to get up the ladder, foolish and ridiculous, when those that are at the top have attained but

danger, trouble, and envy; and those that fall down are accounted miserable?

'——— Sed nulla aconita bibuntur
Fictilibus ———.' "[a]

Referring to their early intimacy, he mentions, with gratitude, that Berry had been the instrument of introducing him into the ministry. "You brought me into the ministry. I am confident you know to what ends, and with what intentions, I desired it. I was then very ignorant, young, and raw; though my weakness be yet such as I must lament, I must say, to the praise of the great Shepherd of the flock, that he hath, since then, offered me precious opportunities, much assistance, and as much encouragement as to any man that I know alive. You know my education and initial weakness were such as forbid me to glory in the flesh: but I will not rob God of his glory to avoid the appearance of ostentation, lest I be proud of seeming not to be proud. I doubt not but many thousand souls will thank you when they have read, that you were the man that led me into the ministry: and shall I entertain a suspicion that you will ever hearken to those men that would rob you of the reward of many such works, and engage you against the King of Saints?" [b]

He concludes his letter with inimitable beauty: "But I have been too tedious. I beseech you interpret not any of these words as intended for accusation or unjust suspicion of yourself. God forbid you should ever fall from that integrity that I am persuaded you once had. But my eye is on the times with grief, and on my ancient, dearest friend with love: and, in an age of iniquity and temptation, my conscience and the world shall never say that I was unfaithful to my friend, and forbore to tell him of the common dangers." [c]

The treatise is of considerable extent, occupying the greater part of one of the volumes of the new edition of his works. He divides it into seventy-three chapters, embracing a vast range of topics, more or less connected with his main subject. He discusses almost every thing that may engage or ensnare the mind; in regard to which, therefore, Christians must be on their guard. The inveterate and extensive power of the principle of selfishness, with its diversified modes of operation, has never perhaps been more strikingly exhibited than in this treatise. SELF is truly and correctly described as

[a] Works, vol. xi. p. 16. [b] Ibid. pp. 23, 24. [c] Ibid. pp. 25, 26.

the great idol which all unsanctified men worship. It is that for which the rich and the ambitious struggle; for which the merchant compasseth sea and land; for which the soldier fights, the tradesman deals, the ploughman labours, the traveller goes forth. It is the ruling principle in the world, and the source of all ambition, contention, and love of pre-eminence, in the church.

In dissecting and illustrating its nature, Baxter is not always strictly accurate; but he is sufficiently so for all the purposes of popular and practical writing. Many things to which he adverts, belong, perhaps, as properly to some of the other evil principles of our nature as to the love of self. It is, however, one of the great roots of that many-branching tree, which bears no fruit that is good or profitable. What Bernard, as quoted by Baxter, says of pride or ambition, may, with great propriety, be applied to this: "Subtile malum secretum virus, pestis occulta, doli artifex, mater hypocrisis, livoris parens, vitiorum origo, tinea sanctitatis, excæcatrix cordium, ex remediis morbos creans, ex medicina languorem generans." Such a root of evil, the Gospel, aided by the omnipotence of divine influence, alone can extirpate from the heart of man.

In this able treatise, there are various indications that the spirit of the author was, at the time, discomposed and fretted. Many things in the state of the times displeased him: the conduct of the ruling powers, the multiplication of sects, the swarming of errors, the want of uniformity among professors of the Gospel, and, of that subordination which Baxter believed to be necessary to a healthy state of religion, with the personal treatment which he sometimes experienced, all tended to grieve and vex him, and give a strong colouring to some of his representations. These, however, are but trifling blemishes, and affect but in a very small degree the valuable practical instruction with which the work abounds.

At the end of the treatise, there is a singular poetical dialogue between the flesh and the Spirit, intended to illustrate some of the sentiments previously stated in prose. It is, in fact, an animated debate between the two opposing principles in man's nature, containing more poetry in the thought than in the rhyme. The following passage, in which the Spirit expostulates with the flesh on its reluctance to death, contains a variety of very beautiful and poetical illustrations of death and the resurrection; and if the reader can make some allowance for a little home-

liness, and an occasional want of harmony, he will be pleased with the thoughts:—

"So nature breaks and casts away the shell,
Where the now beauteous singing-bird did dwell.
Thus roses drop their sweet leaves underfoot;
But the Spring shows that life was in the root.
Souls are the roots of bodies; Christ the head
Is root of both, and will revive the dead.
Our sun still shineth, when with us 'tis night;
When he returns we shall shine in his light.
Souls that behold, and praise God with the just,
Mourn not because their bodies are but dust.
Graves are but beds, where flesh till morning sleeps;
Or chests where God awhile our garments keeps.
Our folly thinks he spoils them in the keeping;
Which causeth our excessive fears and weeping:
But God, that doth our rising day foresee,
Pities not rotting flesh so much as we.
The birth of nature was deformed by sin;
The birth of grace did our repair begin;
The birth of glory at the resurrection
Finisheth all, and brings both to perfection.
Why should not fruit, when it is mellow, fall?
Why should we linger here when God doth call?" [d]

As the virtue of patience is nearly allied to self-denial, I may introduce Baxter's treatise on that subject in this place, since it is now part of the same volume with the discourse on Self-Denial, though it was published many years afterward. It is entitled "Obedient Patience. Its nature in general, and its exercise in twenty particular cases; with helps to obtain and use it, and to repress impatience." It appeared in 1682. Baxter was then the subject of severe afflictions and trials, and was thus called to the special exercise of the Christian grace which he recommends to others. The preface both explains his views of the doleful state of the times, and his reasons for writing this little work:

"I here offer to others the same which I have prepared for myself, and find necessary for my daily use. All men most savour that which they find most suitable to them. When I was young, and lay under the sad suspicions of my own heart, and the doubts of my sound conversion and justification, I was far more pleased with a sermon that opened the nature of saving grace, and helped me against such doubts, than with a sermon of affliction and its use; yea, though I began to be afflicted. But now, this is the subject of my daily necessary thoughts: man's implacable enmity

[d] Works, vol. xi. p. 378.

maketh them somewhat necessary; but God's more immediate corrections on my body, incomparably more. And while every day almost fills my ears with the sad complaints of weak, melancholy, afflicted, impoverished, sick, pained, or otherwise-distressed persons; and the weekly news-books tell us of foreign wars, persecutions, ruins, implacable contentions, malignant combinations against the church, pursuing conscience and obedience to God with diabolical rage to drive them out of the world; and of the successes of bloodthirsty men, and the deluge of atheism, idolatry, Sadduceism, infidelity, Mahometanism, hypocrisy, sensuality, ambition, worldliness, lying, perjury, malignity, and gross ignorance, which have even drowned the earth: while there is little but doleful tidings, complaints, and fears from kingdoms, churches, cities, families: and God, in judgment, permitteth mankind to be worse than serpents, toads, or wolves, if not than devils, to one another; and while wit and learning, reverend error and hypocrisy, are every day as hotly at work as any smith in his flaming forge, to blow the coals of bloody malice; and hating and destroying others, even those whom they pretend to love as themselves, seem to multitudes the most honourable and necessary work, and the killing of love and of souls and bodies, is taken for meritorious of everlasting happiness. I say, while all this is so in the world, and while all flesh must look for pain, sickness, and death; and all men are yet worse to themselves, and greater burdens than all their enemies are, I cannot think a treatise of patience needless or unseasonable."[e]

Under the twenty particular cases which call for the special exercise of patience, he includes bodily affliction, the prospect of death, loss of property, or actual want; the sickness and death of friends; the unfaithfulness of friends; persecution; loss of reputation; the unrighteousness of rulers; treachery and abuse of servants and others; temptations of Satan; trouble of conscience; the loss of the means of grace, &c. &c. All these trials, at one time or another, Baxter had endured himself, and was thus qualified to sympathise with and instruct those who might be suffering from them. Most of his suggestions are calculated either to soothe or to reconcile the mind in the time of sorrow. He is faithful, yet kind; firm, but tender. He could say, with the apostle, "God hath comforted us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted

[e] Works, vol. xi. pp. 383, 384.

of God; for, as the sufferings of Christ have abounded in us, so our consolation also hath abounded by Christ."

In 1660, he published the 'Life of Faith, as it is the evidence of things unseen,' the substance of a sermon which he preached before the king on the 22d of July.[f] But as he afterwards, in 1670, republished this work, enlarged into a 4to volume, it will be proper to notice it in this form. It contains the original sermon enlarged; instructions for confirming believers in the Christian faith; and directions how to live by faith, or how to exercise it on all occasions. In the discourse itself, he discovers much good taste in making no personal allusions to the king himself. Baxter could not flatter, but he could be courteous. A personal address to his majesty, had he attempted it, could scarcely have failed to be offensive; he therefore entirely avoids it, and delivers only truths which were calculated for the peasant as much as for royalty. As a sermon on such an occasion, it contains too much theology, and in all probability must have been very tiresome to Charles. But if Barrow could occupy three hours, Baxter was quite capable of securing attention for as long a period, though I dare say his discourse did not occupy half that time in its delivery. Towards the conclusion, he thus addresses his audience:

"Princes and nobles live not always; you are not the rulers of the unmoveable kingdom; but, of a boat that is in a hasty stream, or a ship under sail that will speed both pilot and passengers to the shore! 'Dixi, estis Dii: ut moriemini ut homines.' It was not the least or worst of kings that said, 'I am a stranger upon earth;' 'Vermis sum, non homo:' You are the greater worms, and we the little ones; but we must all say with Job, 'The grave is our house, and we must make our beds in darkness: corruption is our father, and the worm our mother and our sister.' The inexorable leveller is ready at your backs to convince you by irresistible argument, that dust you are, and to dust you shall return. Heaven should be as desirable and hell as terrible to you as to others. No man will fear you after death; much less will Christ be afraid to judge you. As the kingdoms and glory of the world were contemned by him in the hour of his temptation; so are they inconsiderable to procure his approbation. Trust not therefore to uncertain riches; value them but as they will prove at last. As you stand on higher ground

[f] Works, vol. xii.

than others, it is meet that you should see further. The greater are your advantages, the wiser and better you should be; and therefore should better perceive the difference between things temporal and eternal. It is always dark where glow-worms shine, and where a rotten post doth seem a fire."[g]

In a very delicate manner he presents his suit on behalf of his brethren and himself; hard must have been the heart which would turn from such a petitioner, and refuse such a prayer. "I should have become on the behalf of Christ a petitioner to you for protection and encouragement to the heirs of the invisible world; for them that preach, and them that live in this life of faith. Not for the honours and riches of the world; but for leave and countenance to work in the vineyard, and peaceably to travel through the world as strangers, and live in the communion of saints, as they believe. But, though it be for the beloved of the Lord, the apple of his eye, the people that are sure to prevail and reign with Christ for ever; whose prayers can do more for the greatest princes than you can do for them, whose joy is hastened by that which is intended for their sorrow; I shall now lay by any further suit on their behalf."[g]

Baxter had less of the common vice of preachers of his age, the foolish introduction of Greek and Latin in their sermons, than most of them. There is one singular passage in this discourse that may be regarded as an exception from his general style, and for which the auditors to whom he was preaching may be considered as an apology. The reference to the character of the age, is delicate and happy. "It has lately been a controversy, whether this be not the golden age. That it is 'ætas ferrea,' we have felt; our demonstrations are undeniable. That it is 'ætas aurata,' we have sufficient proof: and while gold is the god that rules the most, we will not deny it to be 'ætas aurea' in the poet's sense:

> 'Aurea nunc vere sunt sæcula: plurimus auro
> Venit honos auro conciliatur amor.'

This prevalency of things seen against things unseen, is the idolatry of the world; the subversion of nature; the perversion of our faculties and actions: making the soul a drudge to flesh, and God to be used as a servant to the world. It destroyeth piety, justice, and charity: it turneth 'jus,' by perversion, into 'vis,' or, by reversion, into 'sui.' No wonder, then, if it be the ruin of societies, when

[g] Works, vol. xii. pp. 51, 52. [h] Ibid. p. 53.

'Gens sine justitiâ, sine remige navis in unda.'

It can possess even Demosthenes with a squinancy, if there be but an Harpalus to bring him the infection. It can make a judicature to be as Plutarch called that of Rome, ἀσεβῶν χωραν', 'impiorum regionem;' contrary to Cicero's description of Sulpitius, who was 'magis justitiæ quam juris consultus, et ad facilitatem æquitatemque omnia contulit; nec maluit litium actiones constituere, quam controversias tollere.'"[1]

The 'Sermon on Faith' occupies about fifty pages; but the treatise which grew out of it, and which may be considered as a kind of appendix, extends beyond five hundred pages: so prolific and expansive was the mind of Baxter, when it had room and verge enough for the exercise of its power. The work consists of two parts: instructions for confirming believers in the Christian faith; and directions how to exercise it on all occasions. It contains what every thing of Baxter's on practical religion does, much that is excellent; but it is more tedious than some other of his treatises, and contains more repetition than was usual with him. In treating on the confirmation of the faith, he introduces many of the same topics which are to be found in his work, 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion.' He had observed that that treatise was neglected by the common class of readers, as not sufficiently adapted to their understandings; he therefore brings forward the evidences of religion again, though in a more popular form.

His directions for the exercise of faith, are not only numerous and minute, but very similar to many of his rules or principles in his 'Christian Directory,' though the latter work was published after the 'Treatise on Faith.' The recurrence of the same sentiments, and the repetition of the same topics, were unavoidable in so voluminous a writer as Baxter; nor ought this to be regretted, as he had different objects in view in his several works, which could not perhaps have been effectually attained by any other way. He ought, however, to have reduced some of his discussions within narrower limits.

The 'Life of Faith' is dedicated to Richard Hampden, esq., the friend of Baxter, the son of the illustrious patriot, and the heir of his virtues. Baxter speaks with much respect of the piety of this gentleman, and his wife, Lady Letitia, and intimates his fervent gratitude for the manifold expressions of their love. He also intimates his earnest desire for the good of their "hopeful children." Alas! the eldest of these children,

[1] Works, vol. xii. pp. 44, 45.

John Hampden, distinguished no less than his grandfather, for talents and public spirit, and far more distinguished for learning, came at last to a very melancholy end. Dr. Calamy, in his 'Own Life,' tells a most affecting story of the progress of his mind, and of the dismal termination of his existence.[1]

These objections to this publication Baxter anticipated, and meets them in his preface more snappishly than is quite desirable, either on his own account or that of the reader. The conclusion of it contains what is true, but what might have been more mildly stated.

"If it offend you that the directions are many of them difficult, and that the style requireth a slow considerate reader, I answer, the nature of the subject requireth it, and without voluminous tediousness, it cannot be avoided. Blame, therefore, your unprepared, ignorant minds; and that you are yet dull of hearing, and thus make things hard to be uttered to your understanding: because you have still need of milk, and cannot digest strong meat, but must again be taught the principles of the oracles of God. Think not to get knowledge without hard study and patient learning; by hearing nothing but what you know already, or can understand by one hasty reading over, lest you discover a conjunction of slothfulness with an ignorant and unhumbled mind. Or at least, if you must learn at so cheap a rate, or else stick still in your milk and your beginnings, be not offended if others outgo you, and think knowledge worthy of much greater diligence; and if, leaving the principles, we go on towards perfection, as long as we take them along with us, and make them the life of all that followeth, while we seem to leave them: and this we will do if God permit."

The last considerable work in this class was published towards the close of his life. The title, which I shall give at large, as it is rather singular, contains a very full view of the subject of which it treats, as well as of the apparent feelings of the author at the time. 'Knowledge and Love Compared; in two parts. I. Of falsely-pretended knowledge. II. Of true saving knowledge and love. 1. Against hasty judging and false conceits of knowledge; and for necessary suspension. 2. The excellency of divine love, and the happiness of being known and loved of God. Written as greatly needful to the safety and peace of every Christian, and of the church: the only certain way to escape

[1] Vol. i. pp. 388—391.

false religions, heresies, sects, and malignant prejudices, persecutions, and sinful wars. All caused by falsely-pretended knowledge, and hasty judging by proud, ignorant men, who know not their ignorance. By Richard Baxter, who, by God's blessing on long and hard studies, hath learned to know that he knoweth but little, to suspend his judgment of uncertainties, and to take great, necessary, certain things for the food of his faith and comforts, and the measure of his church communion." [k]

If a title-page could effect any thing, the above title must have effected a great deal: yet this is one of the small number of Baxter's practical writings, which I do not think much calculated for usefulness. It was written at several intervals before, but was published within two years of his death, when besides his memory, which he acknowledges, it is probable some other of his faculties, had begun to fail. Not that it displays imbecility; some part of it being written with great vigour; but it evinces a diminished perception of what was calculated to do good. By far the largest portion of the volume is a laboured effort to show the uncertainties of knowledge, with a view to prove how ignorant man is, and to diminish confidence in his own judgment. The tendency of this argument, pursued to the length that Baxter carries it, I regard as exceedingly injurious. It is calculated to destroy due respect, both for the means of knowledge which God has provided for us, and the faculties he has given to us. It is more fitted to gender scepticism, and bewilder the mind, than to induce humility. I am well aware the author would have deprecated this effect, and that he was very far from being conscious that he was doing any thing to cause it. This does not, however, alter the character of his book. In fact, Baxter had so occupied himself with the endless and unsatisfying discussions of scholastic and metaphysical writers, that he had much difficulty in satisfying himself on many subjects, and greatly injured his own faculty of judging. In the following passage of this very treatise, he lays before the reader a view of his acquisitions in this kind of learning. It is valuable as part of his history.

"I have looked over Hutten, Vives, Erasmus, Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubon, and many other critical grammarians, and all Gruter's critical volumes. I have read almost all the physic and metaphysics I could hear of: I have wasted much of m time among loads of historians, chronologers, and antiquarie

[k] Works, vol. xv.

I despise none of their learning: all truth is useful. Mathematics, which I have least of, I find a pretty manlike sport. But if I had no other kind of knowledge than these, what were my understanding worth! what a dreaming dotard should I be! Yea, had I also all the codes and pandects, all Cujacius, Wesenbechius, and their tribe, at my fingers' ends, and all other volumes of civil, national, and canon laws, with the rest in the Encyclopædia, what a puppet-play would my life be, if I had no more!

"I have higher thoughts of the schoolmen than Erasmus and our other grammarians had; I much value the method and sobriety of Aquinas, the subtlety of Scotus and Ockam, the plainness of Durandus, the solidity of Ariminensis, the profundity of Bradwardine, the excellent acuteness of many of their followers; of Aureolus, Capreolus, Bannes, Alvarez, Zumel, &c.; of Mayro, Lychetus, Trombeta, Faber, Meurisse, Rada, &c.; of Ruiz, Pennatus, Suarez, Vasquez, &c.; of Hurtado, of Albertinus, of Lud. à Dola, and many others. But how loth should I be to take such sauce for my food, and such recreations for my business! The jingling of too much and false philosophy among them, often drowns the noise of Aaron's bells. I feel myself much better in 'Herbert's Temple,' or in a heavenly treatise of faith and love; and though I do not, with Dr. Colet, distaste Augustine above the plainer Fathers, yet I am more taken with his Confessions than with his grammatical and scholastic treatises. And though I know no man whose genius more abhorreth confusion, instead of necessary distinction and method; yet I loathe impertinent, useless art, and pretended precepts and distinctions, which have not a foundation in the matter."[1]

We cannot help regretting that such a man as Baxter had not better employed his time than in devouring such masses of frivolous and unsatisfying stuff as these writers contain. His mind required that its metaphysical propensities should be counteracted and restrained, instead of encouraged and stimulated, as it must have been by such a course of reading. He professes, it is true, to despise the subtleties of the schools, and to be better pleased with 'Herbert's Temple,' or 'Augustine's Confessions,' than with logical and scholastic debates and distinctions. This, I have no doubt, was the case; and yet he deals in this kind of writing more than any man of his age. He adverts to this objection against himself in the book, and endeavours, though unsatisfactorily, to answer it.

[1] Works, vol. xv. pp. 15, 16.

"When you have written all this against pretended knowledge, who is more guilty than yourself? Who so oppresseth his reader with distinctions? Are all your large writings evident certainties; even those controversies in which you have so many adversaries?" To this he answers,

"1. It is one thing to assert uncertainties, and another thing to anatomize, and distinctly and methodically explain, to certain truth. In all my large writings, if you find that I call any thing certain which is uncertain; that is, which I give not ascertaining evidence of, acquaint me with the particulars, and I shall retract them.

"2. I never persuaded any man to write or say no more than all men certainly know already; no, not all learned divines; for then how should we receive edification? Subjective certainty is as various as men's interests, where no two are of a size; and objective certainty must be tried by evidence, and not by other men's consenting to it." [m]

The second part of the work, on the excellency of love and its superiority to knowledge, is more in Baxter's best style of practical writing. He had then got through his uncertainties, and was treating on the nature and power of love, the first and great principle of religion. No man understood this subject better, and few could treat it so well. He shows, most successfully, that knowledge is but the means to a higher end; and this end is the production of love to God, and to those who bear his image. The constant and vigorous exercise of this love ought to be the highest aim, as it is the perfection of the Christian.

To this work is prefixed a very beautiful dedication to his excellent friend, Sir Henry Ashurst, and "the Lady Diana, his wife." "Your name," he says, "is not prefixed to this Treatise, either as accusing you of the sin herein detected, or as praising you for those virtues which good men are more pleased to possess and exercise, than to have proclaimed, though they be as light that is hardly hid: but it is to vent and exercise that gratitude, which loveth not the concealment of such friendship and kindness as you and your lady eminently, and your relatives and hers, the children of the Lord Paget, have long obliged me by; and it is to posterity that I record your kindness, more than for this age, to which it hath publicly notified itself, during my public accusations, reproaches, sentences, imprisonments, and before and since: who knoweth you that knoweth not hereof?

[m] Works, vol. xv. p. 172.

And it is to renew the record of that love and honour which I owed to your deceased father formerly, though too slenderly recorded, to be the heir and imitator of whose faith, piety, charity, patience, humility, meekness, impartiality, sincerity, and perseverance, is as great an honour and blessing as I can wish you, next to the conformity to our highest Pattern. And though he was averse to worldly pomp and grandeur, and desired that his children should not affect it, yet God, that will honour those that honour him, hath advanced his children, I believe, partly for his sake; but I entreat you all (and some other of my friends whom God hath raised as a blessing to their pious and charitable parents and themselves) to watch carefully, lest the deceitful world and flesh do turn such blessings into golden fetters; and to be sure to use them, as they would find, at last, on their account." [n]

Having noticed the principal works of Baxter in this department, it remains to introduce a few of his tracts, which belong to the same class. Among these must be noticed 'God's Goodness Vindicated; for the help of such, especially in melancholy, as are tempted to deny it, and think him to be cruel, because of the present and future misery of mankind; with respect to the doctrine of reprobation and damnation.'[o] This was published in 1674, at the particular request of his friend Mr. Corbet, with a view to satisfy a good man who had fallen into deep melancholy by dwelling too much on the numbers who will be damned, and the difficulty of reconciling it with the divine goodness. Corbet prefixed an epistle to it. [p]

The subject is one of a deeply mysterious nature, scarcely admitting of being fully understood in our present circumstances. Our faculties are in themselves limited; we are furnished only with partial information respecting the divine administration, and its ultimate objects and designs; and we are as yet far from the end of the whole moral economy of God. To pronounce dogmatically, therefore, on certain points which are but dimly seen, would be wrong; and to allow our minds to be distracted respecting what we do know by the things of which we are ignorant, must be no less improper.

"It is a grossly deluding and subverting way of reasoning," says Baxter, "to begin at dark and doubtful consequents,

[n] Works, vol. xv. p. 8. [o] Ibid. vol. viii.
[p] Life, part iii. p. 85.

thence to argue against certain, clear, fundamental principles. As if from some doubts about the position and motion of the stars, or of the nature of light, heat, and motion, men should argue that there is no sun, or moon, or stars at all; or as if, from the many difficulties in anatomy about the circulation of the blood; the oleum nervosum, the lymph and its vessels, the passages and the succus of the pancreas and gall; the transcolation through the intestines into the venæ lactæ, the chyly glandules, and such-like; one should arise to a conclusion that there is no blood, no chyle, no veins, no glandules, no head, no body. Or, from the controversy, whether the heart be a mere muscle, without any proper parenchymæ, one should grow to conclude that there is no heart. So such persons, from points beyond man's reach, about God's decrees, and intentions, and the mysteries of Providence, conclude or doubt against God's goodness, that is, whether, indeed, there be a God." [q]

If it were practicable to persuade men to reason on these obvious principles, how large a portion of embarrassment, and how many stumbling-blocks would be removed! Baxter does not follow up his principles with all the masterly power and closeness of argument which distinguish the Analogy of Butler; but the germ of Butler's immortal work may be said to be contained in the above passage. There are doubtless difficulties in revelation, as there are difficulties in every scheme of divine Providence which man can adopt; but there is no proper resting place between the rejection of the Gospel, on the score of its not harmonizing with our notions of the goodness of God, and absolute atheism. He who rejects Christianity on this ground, must, to be consistent, doubt whether the Supreme Being takes any interest in the affairs of his creatures; and this is all one with blotting Him out from his own universe.

Under this head I may also rank all Baxter's sermons preached on particular occasions, and which do not require minute consideration. They may be placed either here, or under the head of his writings on Conversion, as they are of a mixed character. The following are among these, 'The Vain Religion of the Formal Hypocrite, and the Mischief of an Unbridled Tongue, described in several Sermons, preached at the Abbey in Westminster, before many Members of the Honourable House of Commons, 1660.' 'The Fool's Prosperity the Occasion of his Destruction, a Sermon, preached at Covent Garden.' 'A Sermon on Repentance, preached before the House of Com-

[q] Works, vol. viii. p. 513.

mons, on the 30th of April, 1660.' 'One on Right Rejoicing, preached in St. Paul's before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, after his Majesty's return, May 10, 1660.' 'What Light must Shine in Our Works.' 'True Christianity, or Christ's Absolute Dominion, and Man's necessary Self-Resignation and Subjection.' 'Two Assize Sermons.' His 'Farewell Sermon,' intended for his flock at Kidderminster. All these discourses are now printed together in the seventeenth and eighteenth volumes of his works.

'The Cure of Melancholy by Faith and Physic,' a sermon intended for the morning exercises, but which was never delivered, is a curious specimen of Baxter's preaching; abounding in medical recipes as well as in grave religious advice. He is quite right, however, in maintaining that physic is necessary, as well as faith, to cure melancholy.

Baxter appears to have had great experience in dealing with melancholy persons. The following passage in his Life relates to the subject of this discourse, and for its practical instruction deserves to be quoted. "I was troubled this year (1671)," he says, "with multitudes of melancholy persons, from several parts of the land, some of high quality, some of low, some very exquisitely learned, some unlearned; as I had been above twenty years before. I know not how it came to pass, but if men fell melancholy, I must hear from them or see them, more than any physician I know. I mention it for these three uses, to the reader, as out of all their cases I have gathered: 1. That we must very much take heed lest we ascribe melancholy phantasms and passions to God's Spirit: for they are strange apprehensions that melancholy can cause. 2. I would warn all young persons to live modestly, and keep at a sufficient distance from objects that tempt them to carnal lust. Above all, I warn young students and apprentices to avoid the beginning of this sin, as they little think what one spark may kindle. 3. I advise all men to take heed of placing religion too much in fears, and tears, and scruples; or in any other kind of sorrow, but such as tendeth to raise us to a high estimation of Christ, to the magnifying of his grace, to a sweeter taste of the love of God, and to the firmer resolution against sin: that tears and grief be not commended inordinately for themselves, or as clear signs of a converted person. We ought to call men more to look after *duty* than after *signs* as such. Set self-love to work, and spare not; so will you call them much more to the love of God. Let

them know that this love is their best sign, but that it ought to be exercised for a higher reason, than as a sign of our own hopes; for that motive alone will not produce true love to God. As the Antinomians too much exclude humiliation and signs of grace, so many of late have made their religion too much to consist in the seeking of these signs out of their proper time and place, without referring them to that obedience, love, and joy, in which true religion doth principally consist."[r]

These very judicious observations show that Baxter was not only a most careful observer of the phenomena of human nature, with which he was so largely conversant, but that in dealing with men he was guided by the soundest principles of philosophy and religion. He justly considered many of the mental or spiritual diseases respecting which he was consulted, to arise from a diseased state of the animal frame, and that the assistance of the physician and the laboratory was required as well as the divine. He prescribed for the body as well as for the soul, though not always in either case with effect.

His views of the proper method of obtaining Christian comfort, and arriving at full satisfaction respecting a personal interest in the salvation of Christ, were sound and highly important. He did not consider these enjoyments, desirable as they are, as what ought to be directly sought, or pursued for themselves. He regarded them as effects or results rather than objects of direct pursuit. Neither health nor happiness will generally be secured by seeking them for their own sake; and will seldom fail to be enjoyed if sought for in a proper manner. This is no less true respecting the health and happiness of the soul; men can never attain them by their being made the grand or exclusive objects of attention.

Baxter produced the right kind of Christian experience, by presenting continually before the mind a great object of attraction, whose holy influence could not fail to accomplish the most delightful and salutary effects, if steadily contemplated. To produce love to God, which is the grand design of all true religion, and the spring of all purifying joy, he spoke of His love in all its fulness, and freeness, and splendour. He aimed at pro-

[r] Life, part iii. pp. 85, 86. Among the Baxter MSS. preserved in the Red-cross-street library, are numerous letters addressed to him by persons in distress of mind, and copies of letters sent by him in reply. Both while he was at Kidderminster, and after his removal from it, especially about the time of his preparing the above discourse, he seems to have had a great deal to do in this way.

ducing an overwhelming sense of gratitude and obligation, by thus exhibiting the infinite riches of the divine generosity. He knew that this would necessarily take the mind off from itself, and engage the exercise of all its faculties on an object at once worthy of their most active and enlarged exercise, and capable of affording the purest and sublimest satisfaction. He knew that the principle of love to God, being once sufficiently roused, would exert itself in doing all the will of God, and in that very exertion happiness would be experienced. The signs and evidences of the Christian character would multiply and abound, and thus those doubts and perplexities would be removed that haunt the soul which is directed chiefly to itself, for reasons of comfort and confidence before God.

His own experience is a happy illustration of the beneficial tendency of these views, and of the conduct which he pursued towards others. From his habit of body, and peculiarities of mind, it might be supposed that he would himself be the subject of much morbid feeling. But this was not the case. He tells us that he never was the subject of melancholy, or that species of mental depression arising from doubts and fears respecting the enjoyment of the divine favour, after he was properly enlightened by the Gospel. He had penetrating views of sin, deep and solemn impressions of death and eternity; but they were all founded on his clear perceptions of the character of God, and the declarations of his word; and were always connected with the enjoyment of calm satisfaction and holy tranquillity of mind. He feared always, but he also loved; he trembled, but he also rejoiced. Religion was his life; its discoveries both elevated and purified his mind; and in the discharge of its duties he found full employment for all his active and energetic powers. In the time of suffering, he fled to it for relief and repose; and he never fled in vain. It was to him a constant, as he ever found it a welcome and a sure, refuge. When in any measure free from personal and outward suffering, and capable of labour, his work left him no time for melancholy musings, or harassing fears respecting his personal safety. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of God, and in doing that will he found a continual feast. Let Christianity be but thus treated, and it will never fail to produce the same practical effects, and to afford the same heavenly joy.

CHAPTER V.

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Introductory Observations—Systematic Theology—The Fathers—Schoolmen—Casuists—Reformers—Calvin's Institutions—Works of Perkins—Archbishop Usher's System—Leigh's Body of Divinity—Baxter's 'Christian Directory'—Intended as the Second Part of his 'Methodus'—His own Account of it—Remarks on the Arrangement—Opposed to the Politics of Hooker—Progress of the Doctrine of Passive Obedience in England—Character of the 'Directory'—Compared with the 'Ductor Dubitantium' of Taylor—'The Reformed Pastor'—'Reasons for Ministerial Plainness'—'Poor Man's Family Book'—'The Catechising of Families'—'The Mother's Catechism'—'Sheets for the Poor and the Afflicted'—'Directions to Justices of the Peace'—'How to do Good to Many'—'Counsels to Young Men'—'The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day'—Concluding Remarks.

If obedience to the will of God be the end and design of all religion, it ought to occupy a chief part of our attention in every discussion of its nature. However difficult it may be to teach men some of the doctrines of religion, the most formidable difficulties really belong to its practice. This arises not from the obscurity which attaches to what God requires, but from the backwardness of man to comply with the requisition. His natural inclinations are all enlisted on the side of disobedience, or, at least, of aversion to a full conformity of disposition to the mind of God. Hence if the vestige of a doubt rests on any divine precept, or inhibition, to which it may be felt inconvenient or undesirable to render positive compliance, advantage is sure to be taken of that doubt. Every subterfuge or excuse which ingenuity can devise, will be resorted to in order to quiet conscience, or to justify to others the conduct which is pursued.

The opportunities and means of practising this species of evasion are very considerable. The unavoidable imperfection and ambiguity of human language, of which even a divine revelation in that language is not altogether divested; the

necessary exceptions belonging to many of the general laws of God, with the great variety of circumstances into which men are thrown, presenting temptations to avail themselves of supposed exceptions in their favour; these, together with the deceitfulness of the human heart, are among the things which create difficulty to the Christian moralist, and have furnished abundant employment to the casuistical divine.

Were it not for the mistake which extensively prevails among mankind, that their interests and those of the law of God are not the same, the difficulty of communicating instruction on religion would not be very formidable. This fatal error, however, is mixed up with all our natural reasonings, and gives a wrong direction or bias to our every thought and feeling. The Creator of the universe is regarded with jealousy and suspicion by his own creature. The principles of his moral administration are supposed to concern rather his own glory, than the happiness of the universe. His laws are pronounced alike arbitrary and severe, if not positively unjust. If the reason of some of them is not fully stated, that concealment is regarded as a sufficient apology for neglect or noncompliance: where the reason is stated, it is not always approved; being perhaps regarded as proceeding from arbitrary power, rather than arising from justice and goodness.

Where such a state of mind prevails, it is at once obvious that we have to do, not with the understanding so much as with the disposition. The darkness of the mind is not mere intellectual ignorance; which an adequate process of instruction could remove. The understanding is indeed dark, but it arises from "an alienation of the life from God." There is ignorance, it is true, but it consists in what the Scriptures emphatically call "blindness of heart." Hence the influence which Christ himself ascribes to inclination in the reception of the will of God: "If any man be inclined to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;" and hence arises the absolute necessity of that divine teaching which the Scriptures invariably represent as lying at the foundation of all enlightened and acceptable obedience to the Most High.

The inspired writers, accordingly, never confine their instructions to the understanding, or regard the reception and influence of Christianity as if they merely resulted from an intellectual process. They do not record their doctrines in creeds, or deliver their precepts in formal summaries. They communicate

both chiefly in the form of addresses to the conscience and to the heart, or in reasonings which, while they are powerfully calculated to enlighten and convince the understanding, are no less fitted to engage the warmest feelings of the soul in favour of obedience to Him, whose highest moral glory is summed up in the attribute of LOVE.

This plan has not been followed by the generality of writers on systematic theology. The theory and practice of religion have been unwisely separated from each other to the injury of both. Thus, what may be regarded as speculative, has been deprived of its most powerful recommendation; and what is practical, has been divested of its living principle. The one is presented as soul without body, the other as body without spirit. In the former, religion is generalised into abstract principles; in the latter, it is shrivelled into outward forms, and reduced to a joyless submission.

It cannot be denied, however, that there are some advantages connected with the separate discussion of these subjects, when properly conducted. This more especially belongs to the press than to the pulpit. In the latter, they ought never to be disjoined. It is not the place for abstract, philosophical disquisition; but for the evangelical enforcement of the truths and duties of Christianity. It is easier to guard against misapprehensions in a written work than in oral discourse: many things can be conveniently and appropriately discussed in books, which would be altogether unsuitable as topics for public preaching.

It would be vain to look for much of systematic theology in the fathers or early writers of the Christian church. They lived too near the period of the Apostles, to feel the necessity or importance of this kind of writing. Nor were their circumstances at all favourable to it. Most of them were incapable of any thing very profound; the body of the people were of the same description; and both teachers and taught were so much conversant with a state of suffering, as to have scarcely either time or inclination for any thing but what bore immediately on the practice or the consolations of the Gospel. Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem were the first among the Greeks who did any thing in this way. The former, in his work, περὶ ἀρχῶν,—or Four Books concerning Principles, while he gives some information, astounds us with allegories and absurdities; the latter, in his 'Catechetical Discourses,' which were written in his youth, conveys

some useful instruction in a less objectionable manner. Augustine, in his 'Enchiridion, or Treatise on Faith, Hope, and Charity,' presents a kind of system, while, in some of his other writings, he discusses many of those questions, which, at a future period, were reduced into more regular form, and occasioned interminable disputes.

It was in the middle ages, that Scholastic Theology, combined into regular system the principles and duties of religion; but unfortunately it presented the subject in a shape, not only opposed to sound philosophy, and repugnant to all correct taste; but was calculated to do the most serious injury to religion. The works of Abelard, Lombard, Aquinas, and the other angelical, or seraphic, doctors of the dark ages, afford proofs of no inconsiderable talent, especially in dialectics; but unfortunately it was employed rather to bewilder the mind than to aid the discovery of truth. The metaphysics of Plato, the logic of Aristotle, and the corrupt theology of the church of Rome, were amalgamated into one crude incoherent mass of unintelligible dogmas, which was honoured with the title of the orthodox faith; and the slightest departure from which was deemed a pernicious heresy.*

The Romish Casuists may be considered as succeeding the scholastic writers, and distinct from them. They occupied themselves not so much with the metaphysics of doctrine as with the metaphysics of practice. Conscience was professedly the chief object of their attention; and the canon law, with the opinions of the fathers, and the decrees of councils and popes, was the rule by which they directed it. Auricular confession naturally gendered this description of writers. It laid open the interior of man to his fellow man to an improper extent; it created a prurient curiosity, and often called forth the utmost effort of human ingenuity in solving real or pretended difficulties; in finding consolation for the wounded conscience, or apologies for the hardened sinner. To assist the junior priesthood in trafficking advantageously with the eternal interests of men, and to render them skilful in all manner of devices for keeping the conscience under subjection to papal authority, were the great objects of the Romish Casuists. Their works are storehouses of logical subtleties, and magazines of moral combustibles sufficient to distract and destroy the universe. Such are the writings of Sanchez, Suarez, Escobar, and others of the same school.

* See Morell's 'Elements,' &c. p. 295.

This style of writing in the department of systematic and casuistic theology among the Romanists, gave place to a simpler and more practical mode of treating such subjects, under the denomination of the "Common Places" and theological counsels of the reformers. Disgusted with the metaphysical absurdities and logomachy of the schoolmen, Melancthon, Luther, and others, produced compendiums, or brief systems, of religion, in which, arranged under various heads, the principal articles of Christian faith and duty were plainly stated. The Confessions of the reformed churches necessarily assumed a systematic form, and expositions, or commentaries on them, brought the doctrines and duties of religion in regular digests before the people of every country in which they were adopted. In most of these productions, while both occupy one book, the *credenda* and the *agenda*, are always treated distinctly.

In Systematic Theology, the Institutions of Calvin, though not the first in the order of time, carried off the palm from all its predecessors, and has not yet been surpassed by any competitor. Diversity of opinion may exist respecting some of the positions of the Genevese reformer, and even among those who hold his general views of Christian doctrine, there may not be an entire concurrence in every sentiment or expression; but while profound piety, masculine energy of mind, acuteness and strength of argument, perspicuity of statement, and purity of language, continue to be respected among men, the 'Christian Institutes' of John Calvin will secure for their author immortal honour.

Our own Reformers did not contribute much in this department, but many of the continental works were translated and introduced into this country soon after their original publication. This was the case with the leading works of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the other distinguished men who adorned the revival of religion and literature in Europe. Their writings spread with the rapidity of light itself, and produced all its cheering effects; dispersing darkness, correcting errors, and diffusing gladness and joy. Their disciples not only embraced their principles, but their spirit; and wherever they were found, reflected and multiplied the benefits which they received.

William Perkins is, properly, the first original writer in our language on the theory and practice of religion, in a regular systematic form. 'The Golden Chain, or the Description

of Theology; containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation,' was written by him in Latin, but appeared in English, translated by another. It was followed by his 'Exposition of the Creed, and of the Lord's Prayer;' and by his 'Three Books of Cases of Conscience.' Perkins was a thorough predestinarian; and in the works above enumerated, though published at different times, he has furnished a tolerably complete body of divinity, on Calvinistic principles. He was a man of highly respectable talents and great piety, and writes in a style superior to most of his contemporaries.

What is called Archbishop Usher's 'Body of Divinity,' was published without his knowledge or consent, in 1645, by Mr. Downham, and is a collection from the writings of others, rather than Usher's own.[1] The only other work of this description deserving of notice, which appeared in English, prior to the works of Baxter, is the 'Body of Divinity,' by Edward Leigh, which was published in 1662. The author is known as having furnished several useful publications. His Hebrew and Greek lexicons show that he was a respectable scholar; and his Annotations on the New Testament, though not elaborate, show that he was a man of sound judgment. The system of divinity is tolerably well arranged, and discovers very considerable knowledge of the Scriptures; but it is broken down into so many divisions and subdivisions, that it appears too much of a dry tabular representation of religion.

The work of Baxter, of which I am about to give some account, the reader will observe, is but the half of his system of theology. The other half is contained in his 'Methodus,' which is properly placed under the head of his doctrinal works. The reason for publishing the one in Latin and the other in English, is not very obvious or satisfactory; but it so pleased the author. I have been more particular in my introductory observations on the present volume, because it is not only the largest of all Baxter's works, but because I purposely avoided saying any thing on the points adverted to, when treating of the 'Methodus.' The following is the title:—

'A Christian Directory; or a Sum of Practical Theology, and Cases of Conscience: directing Christians how to use their Knowledge and Faith; how to Improve all Helps and Means,

[1] Parr's 'Life of Usher,' p. 62.

and to perform all Duties; how to overcome Temptations, and to escape or mortify every Sin.'[u] It appeared in a large folio, in 1673, besides occupying one of the volumes in the folio edition of his 'Practical Works,' published in 1707. In addition to what is said of this book, in connexion with the 'Methodus,' he says of it—"As Amesius's 'Cases of Conscience'[x] are to his 'Medulla,' the second and practical part of theology, so is this to a 'Methodus Theologiæ,' which I have not yet published.[y] It was written in 1664 and 1665, except the ecclesiastical cases of conscience, and a few sheets since added. And since the writing of it, some invitations drew me to publish my 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' my 'Life of Faith,' and 'Directions for Weak Christians;' by which the work of the two first chapters is more fully done."[z]

"I must do myself the right to notify to the reader, that this treatise was written when I was, for not subscribing, forbidden by the law to preach; and when I had been long separated far from my library, and from all books, saving an inconsiderable parcel which wandered with me where I went. By which means this book hath two defects. It hath no cases of conscience but what my bare memory brought to hand; and cases are so innumerable that it is far harder, methinks, to remember them than to answer them; whereby it came to pass, that some of the ecclesiastical cases are put out of their proper place, because I could not seasonably remember them: for I had no one casuist but Amesius with me. After about twelve years' separation, having received my library, I find that the very sight of Sayrus, Fragoso, Roderiquez, Tolet, &c., might have helped my memory to a greater number.[a] But perhaps

[u] Works, vols. ii., iii., iv., v., vi. The Directory was translated into German, by John Nicholai, and published at Frankfort, in 1693, 4to.—Walchii Bib. Theol. Sel., tom. ii. p. 1106.

[x] The work of Amesius, referred to by Baxter, is a beautiful and accurate *Enchiridion*. It is entitled, 'De Conscientia, et ejus jure, vel casibus Libri Quinque.' My edition was printed at Amsterdam in 1654. Within the compass of a small 12mo volume is comprised a larger portion of practical and scriptural instruction than in almost any book that I know. He is in general remarkably accurate in his definitions, and had a power of compression utterly unknown to Baxter.

[y] The 'Methodus' was not published till the year 1681.

[z] Works, vol. ii. Advertisement, p. i.

[a] It is a happy thing that Baxter was absent from his books while engaged on this work; for had he been able to refer to the Romish casuists, he would have been in danger of spoiling his own performance. It is large enough, and

these will be enough for those that I intend them for. And from the same cause, the margin is unfurnished of such citations as are accounted an ornament, and in some cases are very useful. The scraps inserted out of my few trivial books at hand, being so mean, that I am well content (except about monarchy, part iv.) that the reader pass them by as not worthy of his notice.

"It is likely that the absence of books, will appear to the reader's loss in the materials of the treatise; but I shall have this advantage by it, that he will not accuse me as a plagiary. And it may be some little advantage to him, that he hath no transcript of any man's books which he had before; but the product of some experience, with a naked, unbiassed perception of the matter or things themselves.

"Long have our divines been wishing for some fuller casuistical tractate; Perkins began well; Bishop Sanderson hath done excellently, '*De juramento*;' Amesius hath exceeded all, though briefly; Mr. David Dickson hath put more of our English cases about the state of sanctification, into Latin, than ever was done before him; Bishop Jeremy Taylor hath in two folios but begun the copious performance of the work. And still men are calling for more, which I have attempted; hoping that others will come after and do better than we all.[b]

"It is long ago since many foreign divines subscribed a request, that the English would give them in Latin a sum of our prac-

minute enough, as it is; had it contained the stuff which these writers would have suffered, it would have been rendered useless, and perhaps unfit for perusal.

[b] Jeremy Taylor has accounted very justly and ingeniously for the scarcity of casuistical books among the reformed churches in the preface to his 'Ductor Dubitantium.' He says, "they were like the children of Israel in the days of Saul and Jonathan, forced to go down to the forges of the Philistines to sharpen every man his share and his coulter, his axe and his mattock. We had swords and shares of our own, enough for defence, and more than enough for disputation; but in this more necessary part, in the conduct of consciences, we did receive our answers from abroad, till we found that our old needs were sometimes very ill supplied, and new necessities did every day arise."—*Works*, vol. xi. p. 346. His observations on the character and tendency of the Roman casuists, are exceedingly just and important. "We have found," he says, "the merchants to be deceivers, and the wares too often falsified." The work of Dickson, referred to by Baxter, is the 'Therapeutica Sacra, etc., or the Method of Healing the Diseases of Conscience, &c.' It was published in Latin in 1656, and in English in 1695. The author was a Scottish minister, professor of divinity successively in the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. He was a highly respectable man both in talents and learning, and the author of several valuable expository works. He died in 1662.

tical theology, which Mr. Dury sent over; and twelve great divines of ours wrote to Bishop Usher, as Dr. Bernard tells us in his Life, to draw them up a form or method. But it was never done among them all. And it is said that Bishop Downame, at last undertaking it, died in the attempt. Had this been done, it is like my labour might have been spared. But being undone, I have thus made this essay. But I have been necessitated to leave out much about conversion, mortification, self-denial, self-acquaintance, faith, justification, judgment, glory, &c., because I had written of them all before."[c]

The reader will probably be amused, as I have been, with the following defence of himself for writing many and large books. "As to the numbers and length of my writings, it is my own labour that maketh them so, and my own great trouble, that the world cannot be sufficiently instructed and edified in fewer words. But, would not all your sermons set together be as long? And why is not much and long preaching blamable, if long writings be? Are not the works of Augustine, and Chrysostom, much longer? Who yet hath reproached Aquinas or Suarez, Calvin or Zanchy, &c. for the number and greatness of the volumes they have written? Why do you contradict yourselves by affecting great libraries? When did I ever persuade any one of you, to buy or read any book of mine? What harm will they do to those that let them alone? Or what harm can it do you for other men to read them? Let them be to you as if they had never been written; and it will be nothing to you how many they are. And if all others take not you for their tutors to choose for them what books they must read, that is not my doing but their own. If they err in taking themselves to be fitter judges than you what tendeth most to their own edification, why do you not teach them better? Either it is God's truth or error which I write. If error, why doth no one of you show so much charity as by word or writing to instruct me better, nor evince it to my face, but do all to others by backbiting? If truth, what harm will it do? If men had not leisure to read our writings, the booksellers would silence us, and save you the labour; for none would print them. But who can please all men? Whilst a few of you cry out of too much, what if twenty or a hundred for one be yet for more? How shall I know whether you or they be the wiser and the better men?"[d]

[c] Works, vol. ii. pp. 7—9. [d] Ibid. pp. 10, 11.

This is cynical enough, but very characteristic. The work is arranged by the author under four heads: Christian Ethics, or private Duties; Christian Economics, or Family Duties; Christian Ecclesiastics, or Church Duties; and Christian Politics, or Duties to Rulers and Neighbours. This plan is not so complete or systematic as might have been expected from a man who studied order so much as Baxter did, and who attached so much importance to it. The arrangement of a moral system seems accurately marked by the apostle Paul in the three expressive words which he employs: (Titus ii. 12.) "Godliness, righteousness, and sobriety." All the duties which belong to man are included under the head of what he owes to God, what is due to himself, and what belongs to others. This arrangement has usually been adopted by the modern writers on moral subjects. Baxter would seem to omit the first of these heads altogether; and his three last departments belong all to one division—the duties which we owe to others. But it must be said for him, that he had anticipated himself greatly in some of his former writings, by which the regularity of his plan was injured; and under the head of private duties, he includes much of what man owes to God, as well as of what is due to his own interests.

In other respects the plan is at once most comprehensive and particular, embracing, beyond any other book with which I am acquainted, the largest portion of practical casuistry and instruction. It discovers the amazing extent and minuteness of the author's acquaintance with the Scriptures, and with all the principles of human nature. Nothing seems to have escaped his observation, or appeared too difficult to deter him from, at least, attempting its solution. That he should have always succeeded, is too much to expect. The undertaking was too vast even for the mind of Baxter, and his manner of conducting it sometimes discovers weakness; while, on the whole, the work is a powerful illustration of the strength of his mind, and the fertility of his genius.

What is called moral philosophy in modern times, is any thing but the philosophy of morals. Our modern philosophers have supposed they should be better employed in discussing mental operations and the phenomena of human nature, than the principles of obedience to the will of God. And indeed, where divine revelation is either left out of the discussion, or placed below what is called natural religion, it is better that they should amuse them-

selves with other subjects than with the duties which man owes to the Creator. Baxter's work is full of genuine philosophy. Man's responsibility is the basis of his system; the revelation of Heaven its regulating law; his own happiness the inseparable concomitant of the obedience thus produced, having the divine glory for its ultimate end.

No part of the work is less satisfactory than that which treats on politics. This is one of the subjects Baxter least understood, and on which, therefore, he never wrote consistently. It is very entertaining to find him waging war with Hooker, whose principles he considered too popular and democratic. Who would expect to find the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity' a whig, and Richard Baxter the Nonconformist a tory? Yet so it is; the one, inconsistently with his leading principles on church government, maintains that the people are the proper source of all power or authority; the other disputes this, no less inconsistently with some of his sentiments, and with the conduct which in regard to such matters he had pursued.

Hooker maintains, with great ability, the doctrine which he lays down in the following passage:

"That which we spake of the power of government, must here be applied to the power of making laws whereby to govern; which power God hath over all, and by the natural law, whereto he hath made all subject, the lawful power of making laws to command whole politic societies of men, belongeth so properly to the same entire societies, that for any prince or potentate, of what kind soever upon earth, to exercise the same of himself, and not either by express commission immediately and personally received from God, or else by authority derived at first from their consent, upon whose persons they impose laws, it is no better than mere tyranny. Laws they are not, therefore, which public approbation hath not made so."[e]

The reasoning by which Hooker sustains this enlightened constitutional doctrine, it is unnecessary that I should quote. Baxter never appears weaker than in his attempt to overthrow it; he thus introduces his answer, which is a fair sample of all the rest of his argument. The passage shows his respect for Hooker, and his want of confidence in himself on this subject, while it avows a principle subversive of the most valuable rights which we enjoy.

"Because the authority of this famous divine is, with his party,

[e] Works, vol. vi. p. 27.

so great, I shall adventure to say something, lest his words do the more harm; but not by confident opposition, but humble proposal and submission of my judgment to superior and wiser men, as, being conscious of my own inferiority and infirmity, I take all this to be an assertion nowhere by him proved, and by me elsewhere disproved fully. Laws are the effects and signs of the ruler's will and instruments of government. Legislation is the first part of government; and if the whole body are naturally governors, the 'Pars imperans' and 'Pars subdita' are confounded. If the most absolute monarch can make no laws, then disobeying them were no fault. It is enough that their power be derived from God immediately, though the persons be chosen by men. Their authority is not derived from the people's consent, but from God, by their consent, as a bare condition, 'sine qua non.' What if a community say all to their elected king, 'We take not ourselves to have any governing power to give or use, but we only choose you or your family to that office which God hath instituted, who, in that institution, giveth you the power upon our choice:' can any man prove that such a king hath no power but as a tyrant, because the people disclaim the giving of the power, when, indeed, they do their duty? Remember that, in all this, we speak not of the government of this or that particular kingdom; but of kingdoms and other commonwealths indefinitely."[f]

This passage contains the essence of the doctrine of passive obedience as distinctly as was ever contended for by the highest churchman of the day. It obviously confounds the divine appointment of government, with a particular form of government, or with the principles of the governing party. It is monstrous to contend that the right to govern, or the authority to execute laws, is not derived from the people, but from God. Such a principle is the basis of all arbitrary governments, and was the root of all the evils which so long affected the country, and led to the repeated subversion of those who considered themselves the only legitimate possessors of the right to govern. The doctrine contended for is not the doctrine of the Bible; and the maintenance of it is a singular proof of weakness and inconsistency in a man who took such a lead as Baxter, in a body whose very existence implies the principle against which he disputes, and whose exertions have done more to establish that principle in Great Britain than all other things together.

The 'Christian Directory' was published at a time when dis-

[f] Works, vol. vi. pp. 27, 28.

putes on the subject of passive obedience and non-resistance began to be busily agitated. Baxter, though a Nonconformist in fact, was a Churchman rather than a Dissenter in principle. His judgment was in this way entangled, and his consistency frequently destroyed. Hallam, with his usual candour and discrimination, accounts for the principles and writings of some of the clergy on this subject. As the passage explains, though it does not justify, the part which Baxter took, as well as gives a most correct view of the nature and progress of the discussion, I shall give it at large.

"It is not my intention to censure, in any strong sense of the word, the Anglican clergy, at this time, for their assertion of absolute non-resistance, so far as it was done without calumny and insolenc towards those of another way of thinking, and without self-interested adulation of the ruling power. Their error was very dangerous, and had nearly proved destructive of the whole constitution; but it was one which had come down with high recommendation, and of which they could only, perhaps, be undeceived, as men are best undeceived of most errors, by experience, that it might hurt themselves. It was the tenet of their homilies, their canons, their most distinguished divines and casuists. It had the apparent sanction of the legislature in a statute of the present reign. Many excellent men, as was shown after the Revolution, who had never made use of this doctrine as an engine of faction or private interest, could not disentangle their minds from the arguments or the authority on which it rested. But by too great a number it was eagerly brought forward to serve the purposes of arbitrary power, or at best to fix the wavering Protestantism of the court, by professions of unimpeachable loyalty. To this motive, in fact, we may trace a good deal of the vehemence with which the non-resisting principle had been originally advanced by the church of England under the Tudors, and was continually urged under the Stuarts. If we look at the tracts and sermons published by both parties after the Restoration, it will appear manifest that the Romish and Anglican churches bade, as it were, against each other for the favour of the two royal brothers. The one appealed to its acknowledged principles, while it denounced the pretensions of the holy see to release subjects from their allegiance, and the bold theories of popular government, which Mariana and some other Jesuits had promulgated. The others retaliated on the first movers of the Reformation, and expatiated on the usurpation of Lady Jane

Grey, not to say, Elizabeth, and the republicanism of Knox or Calvin.

"From the era of the exclusion bill, especially to the death of Charles II., a number of books were published in favour of an indefeasible hereditary right of the crown, and of absolute non-resistance. These were, however, of two very different classes. The authors of the first, who were perhaps the more numerous, did not deny the legal limitations of monarchy. They admitted that no one was bound to concur in the execution of unlawful commands. Hence, the obedience they deemed indispensable, was denominated passive; an epithet, which, in modern usage, is little more than redundant, but at that time made a sensible distinction. If all men should confine themselves to this line f duty, and merely refuse to become the instruments of such unlawful commands, it was evident that no tyranny could be carried into effect. If some should be wicked enough to co-operate against the liberties of their country, it would still be the bounden obligation of Christians to submit. Of this, which may be reckoned the moderate party, the most eminent were Hickes, in a treatise called 'Jovian,' and Sherlock, in his Case of Resistance to the Supreme Powers. To this, also, must have belonged Archbishop Sancroft, and the great body of non-juring clergy, who had refused to read the declaration of indulgence under James II., and whose conduct in that respect would be utterly absurd, except on the supposition that there existed some lawful boundaries of the royal authority." [s]

But I must return to the general character of the Christian Directory. It is as a book of casuistry, rather than in any other point of view, that it must be contemplated. It is filled with a multitude of directions for the regulation of conduct, and with innumerable cases of conscience, which the author endeavours to solve. For this kind of work, Baxter was pre-eminently qualified, both by the constitution of his own mind, and by his extensive experience. What he was as a metaphysician, has been frequently adverted to. He was trained to casuistry by the writings of the scholastic divines, to which he had devoted so much attention, and of whose discussions he was a profound admirer.

In addition to this, Baxter, from various causes, had for many years been consulted in doubtful and difficult cases, probably by a greater number of persons than any other man of his age.

[s] Hallam, vol. ii. pp. 624—627.

It was an age, too, it should be remembered, in which that kind of spiritual consultation and prescription, was carried to a great extent. We are told by Bishop Heber, in his Life of Jeremy Taylor, that during the time that the celebrated Dr. Owen was dean of Christ-church, a regular office for the satisfaction of doubtful consciences was held in Oxford, to which the students at last ludicrously gave the name of 'Scruple shop.'[h] His Lordship should not have forgotten to mention, in connexion with this, that after the Restoration, there was an office established in London for the sale of dispensations to churchmen to eat flesh in the time of Lent.

Casuistry, in fact, belonged to all the parties of the times. The 'Ductor Dubitantium' shows how it was understood and practised by churchmen; as the 'Christian Directory' illustrates the same thing in relation to the Nonconformists. Whether the palm in this species of writing ought to belong to Taylor or to Baxter, I am not casuist enough myself to take upon me to determine. Taylor had more learning and a greater luxuriance of imagination than Baxter; but the latter was more than his equal in acuteness, in the power of distinguishing, in his knowledge of the human heart, and in the correct estimation of scriptural principle and practice. Taylor deals more with general principles; Baxter with particular cases. The former is frequently extremely happy in his illustrations; the latter in his expositions of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the secret workings of error and sin. Both may be consulted occasionally with profit and advantage; but if resorted to as oracles, they will frequently be found as unsatisfactory as the responses of the Delphic tripod.

The grand objection to the work of Baxter is, that it attempts too much. It substitutes minute instructions instead of the general principles and precepts of the word of God. It leaves too little for the spontaneity of the Christian mind, and perplexes and bewilders by a useless multiplication of questions and cases. He discusses, for instance, thirty tongue sins, and twenty questions for the conviction of drunkards. He proposes eighteen necessary qualifications of lawful recreation; describes eighteen sorts that are sinful; and proposes twelve convincing questions to those who plead for such pastimes. He answers thirty-six questions about contracts: twenty about buying and selling, sixteen representing theft; and *one hundred and seventy-four* about matters ecclesiastical!

[h] Taylor's Works, vol. i. p. 270.

Among other subjects, he considers, whether a mental promise doth oblige; whether money may be given to a bishop, patron, &c., by way of gratitude; whether we may use many words in buying and selling; whether we may buy as cheap as we can; and whether a landlord may raise his rents? He inquires whether love of sleep may be a mortal sin; and gives directions against sinful dreams. He discusses whether we may follow the fashions; and whether deformity may be hid by painting or apparel; whether a minister may kneel down in the pulpit and use his private prayers when he is in the assembly.

I am far from thinking that such questions, and many others on which Baxter bestowed great labour, are absolutely indifferent, but the attempt to meet the infinite variety of puzzles which may be presented in morals and manners, by writing books, is the vainest in which man can engage. Many of Baxter's answers are quite unsatisfactory; they either leave the question where it was, express a vain wish that some things were different, or actually create doubts and perplexities where none existed before. They tend to generate disease as well as to cure it. On sensitive and scrupulous minds, they are in danger of operating injuriously, by feeding and strengthening morbid feelings; while, to minds of a stronger texture, which may be disposed to practise evasion, they answer little purpose, or suggest means of self-defence and justification.

While I thus freely express myself respecting the imperfections or faults of this extensive work, I entertain a strong opinion of the large mass of valuable practical instruction which it contains. One feature pervades it—Baxter never errs in the way of pleading for evil, or apologizing for its appearance. If he errs, it is on the side of rigidity, and not of laxity. Wherever there is a doubt, he holds that the law of God, and not the creature, should have the benefit of that doubt. He never teaches men how near they may approach to evil without danger; but invariably inculcates the necessity of keeping at the greatest distance from it. Many of the books of Romish casuistry, seem to have been constructed for the purpose of justifying men in the commission of sin. They are little better than traps and snares, whose end is death. Even Taylor could go the length of admitting, that private evil may in some cases be done by public men, for the public necessity. But though various of Baxter's rules may easily be abused, I have

not observed any case in which he attempts to plead for evil or excuse it.

On the whole, the best directory for concience is an enlightened acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the possession of a spiritual state of mind. Where these exist, difficulties respecting conduct will not be found in any great degree, or be of long continuance. God has engaged to make the path of duty plain to him who desires to be found in it, and such will always experience the divine faithfulness and goodness. It is impossible to construct nicer balances than those of the sanctuary; or to form better weights and measures for them, than those which God himself has provided. When truth must be dealt out in drams and scruples, or the state of the conscience ascertained by a theological barometer, the health of the soul must be in a very crazy or feeble condition. The cure in such a case must be found, not in a "scruple shop," or in a dispensation office, but in a resolute and persevering application to the great Physician, and the proper use of his heavenly remedies. Where these fail, or are neglected, neither a Ductor Dubitantium nor a Christian Directory will render essential service.[1]

I purposely began this chapter on Christian ethics, with Baxter's 'Directory,' because, though not the first of his works on the great duties of man, as it embraces the whole range it was properly entitled to priority of consideration. The work to which I am now about to advert, is less in bulk, but greater in value, and has rendered the highest services to the cause of Christianity. I refer to his

'GILDAS SALVIANUS: The Reformed Pastor; showing the nature of the pastoral work; especially in private instruction and catechising: with an open confession of our too open sins. Prepared for a day of humiliation, kept at Worcester, Dec. 4th, 1655, by the ministers of that county who subscribed the agreement for catechising, and personal instruction, at their entrance upon that work.'[j] The title which I have here quoted, presents at once to the reader, the nature and design of this important treatise. Baxter was eminently qualified to write on the nature

[1] An 'Abridgment of the Christian Directory,' in two volumes 8vo, was published in 1804, by Dr. Adam Clarke. The only mode of abridging such a book, is reducing its bulk, by leaving out large portions of it. Baxter, I apprehend, would not have smiled at the various attempts which have been made to contract his dimensions.

[j] Works, vol. xv.

and design of the ministerial office. He had now occupied it for a sufficient number of years, to enable him to speak from his own experience. But independently of this, the manner in which he had discharged the duties of the office at Kidderminster, and the extraordinary success with which it had pleased God to bless his labours, pointed him out to his brethren as the proper person to deliver to them, not an *ex cathedra* oration, or a formal *concio ad cleros*, but a pious, earnest, and solemn homily on the onerous duties and responsibilities of the pastoral function.

The manner in which he fulfilled his duties in the church, of which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, we have already seen in his own beautiful account of the causes and means of his success. The volume now before us unfolds the principles by which he was actuated in the discharge of his ministry, and the means by which he endeavoured to make full proof of it. He was himself, allowing for human imperfections, the pastor which he describes, the minister whose portrait he sketches;

> "Whose own example strengthens all his laws,
> And is himself the great sublime he draws."[k]

It is therefore no fanciful sketch, or beau ideal of a character, unattainable by mortals, but the representation of a living reality. This gives it a force and recommendation which it would not otherwise have; and is calculated to meet one of the strongest objections which naturally occur to the mind of every attentive reader. He is disposed at once to ask the question, Can these things be? Can such ardour, such spiritual devotedness, such untiring labour, such unwearied patience, so much wisdom, discrimination, faithfulness, and meekness, be attained? If all these are required to the due fulfilment of the pastor's weighty charge, who is sufficient for these things? The effect of such considerations on some minds, has been most depressing and discouraging, inducing doubts as to whether they have really been called to the work of the ministry, or ought not to abandon it.

Richard Baxter, though possessed of vast natural energy and enterprise, was after all but a man of like passions with others. He was sickly, and feeble in body, and had his own peculiarities of mind; but the grace of Christ wrought mightily in him, and rendered him capable of great things. What he effected was more by the force of principle, and by the diligent and persevering use of divinely-appointed means, than by his extraordinary

[k] Pope, of Longinus.

natural talents. "He studied to show himself a workman approved of God." He gave himself to reading, to meditation, and prayer; and was wholly in these things. This continued and unreserved devotedness is the grand feature in Baxter's ministerial character, and that which accounts for much that he accomplished at Kidderminster.

To describe minutely such a work as the 'Reformed Pastor,' cannot be necessary; and no description could do full justice to its merits. Gildas and Salvianus, whose names are placed first on his title-page, were two writers of the fifth and sixth centuries, distinguished for their bold and faithful warnings. Baxter says, "I pretend not to the sapience of *Gildas*, nor to the sanctity of *Salvian*, as to the degree; but by their names I offer an excuse for plain dealing. If it was used in a much greater measure by men so wise and holy as these, why should it, in a lower measure, be disallowed in another? At least, from hence I have this encouragment, that the plain dealing of Gildas and Salvian being so much approved by us now they are dead, how much soever they might be despised or hated while they were living, by them whom they did reprove, at the worst I may expect some such success in times to come."[k]

His expectation has been more than fulfilled; scarcely any of his books having been more extensively read, or more generally useful than this. Prefixed to it is an address, of considerable length, to his reverend and dearly beloved brethren, the faithful ministers of Christ, in Great Britain and Ireland; full of tenderness and simple fidelity. There is next a short address to the lay reader, in which he speaks of an intention to write a second part of the work, treating more fully of the duties of the people, and their relations to their pastors; but which, I believe, he never executed. The discourse itself is appropriately founded on Acts xx. 28. He first opens or expounds the meaning of the text, and then enters fully into his great subject; which he divides into seven chapters. In these he enters into a full detail of all that is included in the oversight of the flock, the duties necessary to be performed, the manner in which they must be discharged, the actuating motives productive of obedience, the sins of the ministry, the encouragements provided for the faithful, and the threatenings addressed to the ignorant, indolent, or ungodly.

On a few leading points Baxter lays great stress, and where they are attended to, much benefit will invariably accrue. Awakening preaching, holy example, diligent inspection, with

[k] Works, Preface, p. xvii.

catechising, and the faithful administration of discipline. On these points he dwells and enlarges, and they were all strikingly illustrated in his own example. There was a cutting edge in his preaching, which could scarcely be withstood. His own character added all the force of example to his expostulations, reproofs, and injunctions. He was constantly among the people; acquainted with the old and the young; familiar with their characters and circumstances; and prepared to take advantage of every occurrence which might promote their eternal welfare. His discipline followed up his warnings and denunciations; and fearless of any consequences, he administered it with all fidelity and impartiality.

Such a plan and mode of acting could not fail to produce, and they did produce, surprising and lasting effects. There is an obvious adaptation in them to promote the great ends which Christ has in view in the institution of the Christian ministry. Something must no doubt depend on natural as well as moral qualifications, and on advantageous or disadvantageous circumstances. But where there is an ordinary measure of fitness for the work, if such measures as these are diligently and perseveringly prosecuted, the effect will most amply repay the labour. Christian zeal, fidelity, and tenderness, can never be employed in vain.

There is one effect which such a system as Baxter recommends is calculated to produce, and must therefore be watched with great attention. It has a direct tendency to produce profession and hypocrisy, if the love of the truth itself does not take possession of the soul. Baxter, though he could not be satisfied with the mere adoption of the form of religion, yet laid considerable stress on it; and felt as if he had gained a step, when men were induced to comply with certain external ordinances, though they were not converted. The observance of the Sabbath, of family worship, of the Lord's-supper, are all highly important in themselves; yet men may be persuaded to do all these things, who are strangers to the life and power of godliness. When religion comes to be generally respected in a place, or when it is powerfully recommended by certain adventitious circumstances, many will assume the profession, and mistake outward conformity for inward and genuine piety.

The system of Baxter could also be more fully acted upon, while he was minister of the parish of Kidderminster, as circumstances then were, than it could afterwards have been, had he remained in the established church; or than he could have adopted

as the minister of a separate congregation, had he taken such a charge. While in Kidderminster, he enjoyed all the advantages both of the church and dissent. He was the minister of a voluntary congregation, and of a separated Christian society, meeting in the parochial edifice, and supported by the funds of the establishment. He had all the consequence and influence of a clergyman, with all the privileges and independence of a dissenting minister. No clergyman dare now act in the same manner with Baxter; and no dissenting minister can do all that he did: much more, however, might perhaps be done by both, than is generally attempted. He concludes his book with the following very beautiful appeal to his brethren, and reference to the great Author of all good for his blessing.

"I have done my advice, and leave you to the practice. Though the proud may receive it with scorn, and the selfish and slothful with some distaste and indignation, I doubt not but God will use it, in despite of the oppositions of sin and Satan, to the awakening of many of his servants to their duty, and promoting the work of a right reformation: and that his much greater blessing shall accompany the present undertaking for the saving of many a soul, the peace of you that undertake and perform it, the exciting of his servants through the nation to second you, and to increase purity and the unity of his churches."[1]

A very good abridgment of 'The Reformed Pastor' was executed many years ago by the late Rev. Samuel Palmer, of Hackney; the circulation of it has been very extensive. A much improved revision and abridgment of the work, by the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Edinburgh, with an admirable introductory essay by the Rev. Daniel Wilson, has been recently published by Collins, of Glasgow. Both the abridgment and the essay are in all respects worthy of Baxter, and deserving of the widest diffusion.

When he published the treatise, he expressed his confidence that the divine blessing would attend it. Long before he died, he said, with great satisfaction respecting the book, but with great sorrow in reference to the times, "I have very great cause to be thankful to God for the success of that book, as hoping many thousand souls are the better for it, in that it prevailed with many ministers to set upon that work which I there exhort them to: even from beyond the seas, I have had letters of request, to direct them how they might bring on that work according as that book had convinced them that it was their duty. If God would but reform the ministry, and set them on

[1] Works, vol. xiv. p. 354.

their duties zealously and faithfully, the people would certainly be reformed: all churches either rise or fall, as the ministry doth rise or fall; not in riches and worldly grandeur, but in knowledge, zeal, and ability for the work. But since bishops were restored, this book is useless, and that work not meddled with."[m]

I shall conclude my account of this invaluable book, by requesting the attention of my brethren in the ministry, who may happen to glance at these pages, to the following testimony of Dr. Doddridge: 'The Reformed Pastor' is a most extraordinary performance, and should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care; and, I think, the practical part of it reviewed every three or four years. For nothing would have a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which, many good men are but shadows of what, by the blessing of God they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in this incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued."[n]

With 'The Reformed Pastor' may be connected, with great propriety, one of Baxter's tracts, though it was published in 1676, 'Reasons for Ministers using the greatest plainness and seriousness possible in all their applications to their people.'[o] It occupies only a few pages; but is full of the most solemn and serious statements, appealing at once to ministers and people. To the former to induce fidelity, and to the latter to encourage submission to its exercise.

The mind of Baxter could embrace the most sublime and the most abstruse subjects; it could also descend and accommodate itself to the simplest and rudest elements of knowledge. Like Watts, he could reason with philosophers, and become the instructor of children. Families were the object of his great attention and solicitude while he ministered at Kidderminster; and the poorest as well as the richest enjoyed his labours. In no capacity does he appear to more advantage than as the author of 'The Poor Man's Family Book.'[p] This is, in fact, a compendium of divinity and religion, communicated in a familiar conference between a teacher and a hearer, extending over eight days, and comprehending a form of exhortation to the sick;

[m] Life, part i. p. 115.
[n] Doddridge's 'Lectures on Preaching and the Pastoral Care.'
[o] Works, vol. xv. [p] Works, vol. xix.

two catechisms; a profession of Christianity; forms of prayer for various occasions, and psalms and hymns for the Lord's day. He states the design of the book; and appeals so affectingly to the rich, to assist him in circulating it among the poor, that I cannot do better than allow him to speak for himself.

"This book was intended for the use of poor families, which have neither money to buy many books, nor time to read them: I much desired, therefore, to have made it shorter; but I could not do it without leaving out that which I think they cannot well spare. That which is spoken accurately, and in few words, the ignorant understand not: and that which is large, they have neither money, leisure, nor memory, to make their own. Being unavoidably in this strait, the first remedy lieth in your hands; I humbly propose it to you, for the souls of men, and the comfort of your own, and the common good on the behalf of Christ the Saviour of your souls and theirs, that you will bestow one book (either this or some fitter) upon as many poor families as you well can. If every landlord would give one to every poor tenant that he hath, once in his life, out of one year's rent, it would be no great charge in comparison of the benefit which may be hoped for, and in comparison of what prodigality consumeth. The price of one ordinary dish of meat will buy a book: and to abate, for every tenant, but one dish in your lives, is no great self-denial. If you, indeed, lay out all that you have better, I have done. If not, grudge not this little to the poor and to yourselves: it will be more comfortable to your review, when the reckoning cometh, than that which is spent on pomp and ceremony, and superfluities, and fleshly pleasures. And if landlords (whose power with their tenants is usually great) would also require them seriously to read it, (at least on the Lord's day,) it may further the success. And I hope rich citizens, and ladies and rich women, who cannot themselves go to talk to poor families, will send them such a messenger as this, or some fitter book to instruct them, seeing no preacher can be got at so cheap a rate. The Father of spirits, and the Redeemer of souls, persuade and assist us all to work while it is day, and serve his love and grace for our own, and other men's salvation."[p]

The whole work is conducted in the form of a dialogue, which is maintained with great vigour by the various interlocutors. The style is familiar and easy, but not vulgar. While every sentiment is made as intelligible as possible to the poor, there is

[p] Works, vol. xix. p. 295.

much to please, and scarcely any thing to offend a person of the most delicate taste. Baxter could distinguish, which is not always done, between plainness and home dealing, and what is low and vulgar. He made it his object to elevate the minds of the poor, without degrading the ministry, or injuring the pure and sublime doctrines of the cross. In this book we have of course no learned quotations, but few of his nice distinctions, and none of his technical words and phrases. It is pure good English writing. The prayer at the end of the book, of a dying believer, is exquisitely beautiful. It may be poured out in a cottage; it might be uttered in a palace. It is the breathing of heaven, and the earnest of its enjoyment.

This little work met with great acceptance when it was first published. It appears to have been given away in great numbers by the author himself, as well as by benevolent individuals who approved of this method of promoting religion. The effects produced by such means are rarely known in this world. The extent to which the poor and the afflicted are relieved by books and tracts, will only be ascertained when the world, the scene of their dispersion, has passed away. The following anecdote of the origin of the dissenting congregation at Daventry will perhaps interest the reader, in connexion with the 'Poor Man's Family Book:'

Nonconformity took early root in this parish. After the Bartholomew Act, in 1662, secret meetings for worship were frequently held late at night, and conducted only occasionally by ministers, at a house in the hamlet of Drayton, in which was a back-door opening into the fields, to facilitate retreat in case of detection—no unnecessary precaution in those days of persecution.

The immediate rise of the present congregation is thus related by Dr. Ashworth, as communicated to him about the year 1747, by Mr. Thomas Porter, one of the members, then upwards of eighty years of age: "An aged minister, who lived some considerable distance beyond Daventry, in his way to London, lay at the Swan Inn (formerly the principal inn) in this town, where he was taken ill, and confined for a week or longer. Mr. Lindsay, who kept the house, and all his family, behaved to him with much kindness; and it appears to have been a remarkably regular house. The minister, on the evening before he departed, desired the family to come into his room, where he particularly

thanked Mr. Lindsay, and each of his family, for their civility to him, and expressed much satisfaction in the good order of the house; but, said he, something leads me to think that there is not the fear of God in this house. It grieves me to see such honesty, civility, economy, and decency, and yet religion is wanting, which is the one thing needful. On this, he entered into a close conversation with them on the nature and importance of real and inward religion, which he closed with telling them, he had with him a little book, lately printed, which he would give them, and wished them to read it carefully. On which he gave them Baxter's 'Poor Man's Family Book.' This fixes the date to 1672, or later, the year in which that book was printed. It is not certain who the minister was, or that Mr. Lindsay ever saw him again, or knew his name; but it was suspected that it was Baxter himself. Mr. Lindsay read the book with pleasure, sent for others of Mr. Baxter's books, and he and some of his children became excellent characters. Upon this he grew weary of the inn, and being in plentiful circumstances, retired to a house in the middle of the High Street, which had a small close behind it; at the extremity of which, upon the back lane (opposite the inlands), there stood some outbuildings, which he converted into a meeting-house. This was probably after the Revolution. He always intended, and often promised, to settle it in form; but, dying suddenly, it never was done." [q]

Encouraged by the reception and success of his Poor Man's Book, Baxter published, in 1682, what he considered a second part of it, 'The Catechising of Families,' in which he proposes to instruct householders how to teach their households; and also to afford assistance to schoolmasters and teachers of youth: "expounding," he says, "First, The law of nature; Secondly, The evidence of the Gospel; Thirdly, The Creed; Fourthly, The Lord's Prayer: Fifthly, The Commandments; Sixthly, The Ministry; Seventhly, Baptism; Eighthly, The Lord's Supper. It is suited to those that are past the common little catechism; and I think these two family books to be of the greatest common use of any that I have published. If households would but do their parts in reading good books to their households, it might be a great supply where the ministry is defective: and no

[q] Baker's 'Northamptonshire,' quoted in the 'Eclectic Review' for September, 1828.

ministry will serve sufficiently without men's own endeavours for themselves and families" [r]

In his estimate of this and his former work, he was by no means mistaken. They are both admirably adapted for usefulness among the class of persons for which they were chiefly designed. They contain a large portion of theological instruction, conveyed with much simplicity, and often in a very impressive manner. In informing the understanding, Baxter never loses sight of the heart. He is constantly preparing or directing some arrow, which, by the blessing of God, may be lodged in some breast, thus causing conviction of sin, and leading to the righteousness which is by faith. Both the Family Book and the Catechism are fitted for other families beside the poor. There is little to offend any class of society, and much that might instruct and profit the young, even in the highest walks of life.

Baxter was the author of another catechism still. It appeared after his death; being edited by Sylvester in 1701, with the humble title of "The Mother's Catechism; or a familiar way of catechising children in the knowledge of God, themselves, and the Holy Scriptures." [s] Though it is called a catechism, it is rather a familiar dialogue between a mother and a child, beginning with the first principles or elements of knowledge, and proceeding to some of its more advanced stages. A considerable part of it, is very good, but is beyond the capacity of a very young child, for which it was principally intended as a preparation for the next catechism. It shows, however, that Baxter could cease to be metaphysical, and that he could accommodate himself to the simplest understanding when he set himself to that kind of work. It is only to be regretted that he sometimes forgot "men are but children of a larger growth," and consequently adopted a style of instructing them too artificial, and more calculated to show the powers of the teacher, than to promote the benefit of the taught.

With these publications, intended chiefly for the good of the poor, may with propriety be connected the sheets or tracts which he published for their benefit, though they have now entirely disappeared. He printed and circulated, in the year 1665, two sheets for the instruction of poor families, and one of instruction for the sick in the time of the plague. It is very evident, both from what he wrote, and from the practice which he pursued,

[r] Life, part iii. p. 191. [s] Works, vol. xviii.

that he was a great advocate for the circulation of religious tracts. He spent a considerable portion of the profits of his own works in this way. The following account of these tracts will show how little there is of novelty in modern plans of usefulness.

"When the grievous plague began at London, I printed a half sheet to stick on a wall, for the use of the ignorant and ungodly, who were sick, or in danger of the sickness; for the godly I thought had less need, and would read those larger books which are plentiful among us. And I the rather did it because many well-minded people who are about the sick, that are ignorant and unprepared, and know not what to say to them, may not only read so short a paper to them, but see there in what method such persons are to be dealt with, in such a case of extremity, that they may themselves enlarge as they see cause.

"At that time, Mr. Nathaniel Lane wrote to me to intreat me to write one sheet or two for the use of poor families, which will not buy or read any bigger books. Though I knew that brevity would unavoidably cause me to leave out much necessary matter, or else to write in a style so concise and close as will be little moving to any but close judicious readers, yet I yielded to his persuasions, and thought it might be better than nothing, and might be read by many that would read no larger, and so I wrote two sheets for poor families: the first containing the method and motives for the conversion of the ungodly; the second containing the description or character of a true Christian, or the necessary parts of Christian duty, for the direction of beginners in a godly life. These three last sheets were printed by the favour of the archbishop's chaplain, when the Bishop of London's chaplain had put me out of hope of printing any more." [t]

From catechising children, we must follow Baxter, in this department of his ministry, to other classes of persons. He published a sheet in 1657, of 'Directions to Justices of the Peace, especially in Corporations, for the Discharge of their Duty to God.' [u] This tract will not be supposed of the same nature with a legal directory. In fact, it does not meddle with the law at all, but contains some very good general rules, calculated to assist in the administration of justice, or to suggest to the persons occupying this place important means of doing good. It was written at the request of Mr. William Mountford, bailiff of Kidderminster, "who requested me," he says,

[t] Life, part i. pp. 121, 122. [u] Works, vol. xv.

"to write him down a few brief instructions for the due execution of his office of magistracy; which having done, considering how many mayors, and bailiffs, and country justices, needed it as well as he, I printed it upon an open sheet, to stick upon a wall."[x] The tract shows the different state of things which must then have obtained in the country from any with which we are acquainted now. Baxter assumes that the justices begin with hearing the word of God, and fasting and prayer; and that they are resolved to do the will of God. Would that such were the condition of society at present, that we might take it for granted religious principles influenced generally the magistracy of the land! He found it necessary even then, however, to recommend the discouragement or suppression of unnecessary ale-houses, the punishment of drunkards and swearers, &c. As a tract, these directions might still be circulated, perhaps, to some advantage.

Another class of persons engaged the attention of the indefatigable servant of Christ—the merchants and citizens of London. He published, in 1682, 'How to do Good to Many; or, the Public Good the Christian's Life: with Directions and Motives to it.'[y] In a dedication to the 'Truly Christian Merchants and Citizens of London,' he refers to the circumstances in which this sermon, or rather treatise, was prepared, and addresses them with great affection.

"What doctrine it was that I last prepared for you, I thought meet to desire the press thus to tell you: not to vindicate myself, nor to characterize them who think that it deserves six months' imprisonment, but to be in your hands a provocation and direction for that great work of a Christian life, which sincerely done, will prepare you for that safety, joy, and glory, which London, England, or earth, will not afford, and which men or devils cannot take from you: when, through the meritorious righteousness of Christ, your holy love and good works to him, in his brethren, shall make you the joyful objects of that sentence, 'Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom,' &c. This is the life that needeth not to be repented of, as spent in vain. Dear friends, in this farewell I return you my most hearty thanks for your extraordinary love and kindness to myself, much more for your love to Christ, and to his servants, who have more needed

[x] Life,' part i. p. 117. I apprehend our Tract Society has not yet thought of adapting its single sheets to this class of persons.

[y] Works, vol. xvii.

your relief. God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love. You have visited those that others imprisoned, and fed those that others brought into want; and when some ceased not to preach for our affliction, it quenched not your impartial charity. It has been an unspeakable mercy unto me, almost all my days (when I received nothing from them), to have known so great a number as I have done, of serious, humble, holy, charitable Christians, in whom I saw that Christ hath an elect, peculiar people, quite different from the brutish, proud, hypocritical malignant, unbelieving world. O how sweet hath the familiarity of such been to me whom the ignorant world hath hated! Most of them are gone to Christ: I am following. We leave you here to longer trial. It is like you have a bitter cup to drink, but be faithful to the death, and Christ will give you the crown of life. The word of God is not bound, and the Jerusalem above is free, where is the general assembly of the first-born, an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of the just made perfect, with Christ their glorified head. The Lord guide, bless, and preserve you."[z]

The great object of the discourse is to point out a variety of methods of doing good, which may be adopted by persons of affluence. It is full of sound practical wisdom, and shows that Baxter's mind could, even under all the depressing circumstances of the country, take an enlarged and enlightened view of that benevolence which ought to be a leading feature in the character of every Christian. The publication of books and tracts, the printing and circulation of the Scriptures, the sending forth of missionaries, were among the plans of usefulness which he proposed. The following short paragraph will show that the germs of Bible, missionary, and tract societies were all in the mind of this most energetic and enlightened man.

"Is it not possible, at least, to help the poor ignorant Armenians, Greeks, Muscovites, and other Christians, who have no printing among them, nor much preaching and knowledge; and, for want of printing, have very few Bibles, even for their churches or ministers? Could nothing be done to get some Bibles, catechisms, and practical books, printed in their own tongues, and given among them? I know there is difficulty in the way; but money, and willingness, and diligence, might do something.

[z] Works, vol. xvii. pp. 289, 290.

Might not something be done in other plantations as well as in New England, towards the conversion of the natives there? Might not some skilful, zealous preachers be sent thither, who would promote serious piety among those of the English that have too little of it, and might invite the Americans to learn the Gospel, and teach our planters how to behave themselves christianly towards them, to win them to Christ."[a]

A third class of persons occupied his attention, and engaged his exertions. He published, in the same year with the preceding, 'Compassionate Counsel to all Young Men; especially London Apprentices; Students of Divinity, Physic, and Law; and the Sons of Magistrates and Rich Men.'[b] This little work is distinguished by the great affection and faithfulness which are combined in its pages. It contains the most affectionate counsels and warnings to youth, in whom he was so deeply interested. His success in Kidderminster, and his experience afterwards, led him to this work.[c]

"In the place," he says, "where God most blessed my labours, at Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, my first and greatest success was upon the youth; and, which was a marvellous way of divine mercy, when God had touched the hearts of young men and girls with a love of goodness, and delightful obedience to the truth, the parents and grandfathers, who had grown old in an ignorant, worldly state, did many of them fall into a liking and love of piety, induced by the love of their children, whom they perceived to be made by it much wiser, and better, and more dutiful to them. God, by his unexpected, disposing providence, having now for twenty years placed me in and near London, where, in a variety of places and conditions (sometimes under restraint by men, and sometimes at more liberty), I have preached but as to strangers, in other men's pulpits, as I could, and not to any special flock of mine; I have been less capable of judging of my success; but, by much experience, I have been made more sensible of the necessity of warning and instructing youth than I was before. The sad reports of fame have taught it to me; the sad complaints of mournful parents have taught it me; the sad observation of the wilful impenitence of some of my acquaintance tells it me; the many scores, if not hundreds, of bills that have been publicly put

[a] Works, vol. xvii. p. 330. [b] Ibid. vol. xv.

[c] He tells us in his Life, that Sir Robert Atkins contributed to the expense of printing it; and that he gave away in the city and country fifteen hundred copies, beside what were sold by the booksellers.—Part iii. p. 190.

up to me to pray for wicked and obstinate children, have told it me; and, by the grace of God, the penitent confessions, lamentations, and restitutions of many converts, have more particularly acquainted me with their case; which moved me, on my Thursday's lecture, awhile to design, the first of every month, to speak to youth, and those that educate them." [d]

The last work which comes properly under the present head is, 'The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day Proved, as a Separated Day for Holy Worship; especially in the Church Assemblies; and, consequently, the cessation of the Seventh-Day Sabbath.' 8vo. 1671.[e]

The subject discussed in this volume is one of vital importance to the interests of morality, and of practical religion. The manner in which the Sabbath is observed may justly be considered as the pulse or index of religion, which shows whether it is in a healthy or diseased state, either in communities or individuals. It will be found to consist with general experience, that, as the duties and privileges of this sacred day are conscientiously or carelessly regarded, true religion will prosper or decline. On these accounts, not only theological, but moral writers, have considered the subject of the Sabbath one of the very first importance, in treatises embracing the duties of religion.

A considerable diversity of opinion, however, has prevailed respecting the grounds on which the entire consecration of the first day of the week to holy purposes properly rests. Little is directly said on this subject in the New Testament, much therefore depends on inferential reasoning. The references to the subject in the early Christian writers, are far from satisfactory. It appears clearly enough, that Christians met on that day for public worship; but not so clearly that they consecrated the whole day to God. Few, if any of the Reformers, British or Continental, held the divine obligation of the first day of the week. Calvin and Cranmer, Luther and Melancthon, all agreed in regarding it as the appointment or free choice of the church, rather than the positive appointment of God.[f] The English Puritans at an early period endeavoured to place its obligation

[d] Works, vol. xv. pp. 299, 300. [e] Ibid. vol. xiii.

[f] The reader may consult, on this subject, the 'Augustan Confession,' sect. 16, 'Helvetian Confession,' cap. 24, 'Calvin. Institut.' lib. ii. cap. 8. sect. 34. The works of Frith, Tindal, Barnes, and Cranmer, show that the English Reformers were of the same opinion—that the Sabbath was a *holiday* appointed by the church.

on the high ground of divine appointment; and from that period to the present time, a controversy on the subject has been more or less continually agitated.

While the first day of the week was thus matter of debate, another question was introduced by some, whether the obligation of the *seventh* day had really ceased; and that it had not, a few persons contended with considerable zeal, and some show of argument. This view of the subject appears to have arisen chiefly from two causes: many of the opposers of infant baptism, having been led to maintain that all positive institutions of religion, must have for their foundation a positive divine command; and finding such a command to observe the seventh, but no such command respecting the first day of the week, to be consistent, they gave up the Christian Sabbath, as they had given up infant baptism. I believe the Sabbatarians, as they have since been called, have generally been Baptists. But this was not the only source of the sentiment now adverted to. Many of the Puritans, in discussing the subject of the Lord's Day, resting the strength of their argument on the moral obligation of the fourth commandment, contended in fact for the observance of the first day of the week on the principles of Judaism. This drove some men, such as Milton, to maintain that the Sabbath had entirely ceased.

From the operation of these and other causes, there had been a great deal of controversy respecting the Sabbath, before Baxter wrote this treatise. His object in it is twofold; to correct those who regarded the Lord's Day as a kind of Jewish sabbath; and to confute those again who either maintained the abrogation of a day of sacred rest altogether, or contended for the continued obligation of the Jewish sabbath. He had therefore to meet the high-church men, who looked on the Sabbath merely as a holiday; such as White, Heylin, and Ironside; and those of the Puritans who confounded it with the Mosaic system, such as Bound, Cawdry, and Palmer; with those who were for setting aside the first day of the week entirely.

I consider this one of the most judicious of Baxter's works. It judiciously combines controversial and practical discussion, both of which are managed with great fairness, and display great accuracy of scriptural knowledge. The ground he takes is stated in the following series of propositions, which he afterwards proceeds to establish and illustrate.

The first proposition is, 'That Christ commissioned his apostles as his principal church ministers, to teach the churches

all his doctrine, and deliver them all his commands and orders, and so to settle and guide the first churches.' The second proposition is, 'That Christ promised his Spirit accordingly to his apostles, to enable them to do what he had commissioned them to do, by leading them into all truth, and bringing his words and deeds to their remembrance, and by guiding them as his church's guides.' The third proposition is, 'That Christ performed this promise, and gave his Spirit accordingly to his apostles, to enable them to do all their commissioned work. The fourth proposition is, 'That the apostles did actually separate or appoint the first day of the week for holy worship, especially in church assemblies.' The fifth proposition is, 'That this act of theirs was done by the guidance or inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which was given them.'

"When I have distinctly proved these five things, no sober, understanding Christian can expect that I should do any more, towards the proof of the question in hand, whether the first day of the week be separated by God's institution for holy worship, especially in church assemblies." [g]

I am fully satisfied, that the ground here taken is the only scriptural and satisfactory ground of the divine obligation of this sacred day. It places it correctly on the footing of a New-Testament ordinance; while it does not deprive it of all that support from the analogy of the original appointment of a day of rest, and of the Mosaical institution, which it may properly have. Unless we reason from the recorded example of the apostles and primitive Christians, and regard that example as not less binding than apostolic precept, we shall find very little authority for most of the ordinances of Christianity.

"I much pity and wonder," says Baxter, "at those godly men who are so much for stretching the words of Scripture to a sense that other men cannot find in them; as that in the word *graven images*, in the second commandment, they can find all set forms of prayer, all composed studied sermons, and all things about worship of man's invention, to be images or idolatry; and yet they cannot find the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath in the express words of Col. ii. 16, nor the other texts which I have cited; nor can they find the institution of the Lord's Day in all the texts and evidences produced for it." [h]

[g] Works, vol. xiii. p. 371. There is only another writer of the same period with Baxter known to me, who takes the same view of the subject, and almost the same ground—'Warren's Jew's Sabbath Antiquated, and the Lord's Day Instituted by Divine Authority.' 1659. 4to. It is a very able treatise.

[h] Ibid. p. 367.

In the course of this treatise, Baxter gives a singular account of the way in which the observance of the Sabbath was attended to in his early days. It is an admirable illustration of the Book of Sports, the production of the far-famed wisdom of James I., and sanctioned by his son Charles.

"I cannot forget," he says, "that in my youth, in those late times, when we lost the labours of some of our conformable godly teachers for not reading publicly the book of sports and dancing on the Lord's Day, one of my father's own tenants was the town piper, hired by the year (for many years together), and the place of the dancing assembly was not an hundred yards from our door. We could not, on the Lord's Day, either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a psalm, or catechise or instruct a servant, but with the noise of the pipe and tabor, and the shoutings in the street continually in our ears. Even among a tractable people we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called puritans, precisians, and hypocrites, because we rather choose to read the Scriptures, than to do as they did; though there was no savour of nonconformity in our family. And when the people by the book were allowed to play and dance out of public service time, they could so hardly break off their sports, that many a time the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over. Sometimes the morris-dancers would come into the church in all their linen, and scarfs, and antic-dresses, with morris-bells jingling at their legs; and as soon as common prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again."[h]

Greatly as the Sabbath is still neglected or profaned among us, it ought to afford sincere satisfaction that such scenes as the above could not now be transacted in any part of England. Much however, still remains to be done before the divine obligation of the Lord's Day will be generally acknowledged and respected in this Christian country. Had the views of the reformers on this subject been more correct, greater progress would doubtless have been made, as their sentiments would have had an influence on some of the legal enactments of the country. Little can now be done, except by the operation of Christian principle and example on the public habits and manners of the people. As genuine Christians increase, and their power comes to be more exerted, many evils, and among these the profanation of the Sabbath, will be gradually abated, and ultimately abolished.

[h] Works, vol. xiii. p. 444.

We have now gone over the various ethical writings of Baxter. How extensively he entered into this department, and how ably he treated it, must be apparent even from this imperfect review. No class of persons, no description of duty, escaped the vigilance of his attention. Unfettered by any peculiarities of his theological system, he made it his business to stir up all men to a sense of their duty to God and others. Whatever the Law-maker enjoined, he considered himself bound to enforce, regardless of all the excuses which men plead, and the apologies which they offer for any act of disobedience. He never thought of allowing moral impotence, that is, indisposition to do the will of God, as a reason for noncompliance. On the contrary, he made use of this very indisposition as a reason why men should repent, and seek for strength where alone it is to be found. If evangelical motives do not always occupy a conspicuous place in this class of his writings, it is not because he wished to keep them out of view, but because he either took it for granted that they were understood, or considered it important to give prominence to certain other topics, which preachers of the Gospel are sometimes in danger of overlooking. Take his writings of this class as a whole, they are exceedingly valuable, and furnish a most complete answer to all who would charge those who preach the truth, as it is in Jesus, with indifference, or inattention to the claims of morality. No man contended more strenuously than Baxter for the preaching of Jesus, as a Saviour; and no man more zealously preached him as Christ, THE LORD.

CHAPTER VI.

WORKS ON CATHOLIC COMMUNION.

Unity of the Early Christians—Causes of Separation—Means of Re-Union—Sentiments of Hall on this Subject—Baxter, the Originator, in Modern Times, of the true Principle of Catholic Communion—His various Labours to promote it—'Christian Concord'—Church Communion at Kidderminster—'Agreement of Ministers in Worcestershire'—'Disputations of Right to the Sacraments'—Sir William Morice—'Confirmation and Restauration'—'Disputations on Church Government'—Dedicated to Richard Cromwell—'Judgment concerning Mr. Dury'—Some Account of Dury—'Universal Concord'—Baxter's Efforts in promoting Union retarded by the Restoration—'Catholic Unity'—'True Catholic and Catholic Church—'Cure of Church Divisions'—Controversy with Bagshaw—'Defence of the Principles of Love'—'Second Admonition to Bagshaw'—'Church told of Bagshaw's Scandal'—Further Account of Bagshaw—'True and only Way of Concord'—'Catholic Communion Defended,' in Five Parts—'Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale'—'Baxter's Sense of the Subscribed Articles'—'Church Concord'—'Of National Churches'—'Moral Prognostication'—Summary View of Baxter's Sentiments on Catholic Communion and Church Government.

When the kingdom of heaven was first set up among men, there was only one name by which its subjects were designated, but one authority to which they all bowed, and one fellowship to which they all belonged. A primitive Christian could have formed no idea of the character of a person, or the kind of treatment to which he was entitled, whom he was called to recognise as a believer, but with whom he must not have communion in the most sacred ordinance of the Gospel. There were differences of opinion and practice then as well as now, but such a thing as I have adverted to could neither have been understood nor practised. Had Christianity been left to maintain and extend itself in the world by its own unaided power, and its own scriptural means, it is probable that this state of things would have continued. But when it was thought necessary to define it more accurately than

than God himself had done; to require men to submit to human expositions of the faith, rather than to the faith itself; and to employ coercive measures to preserve and enforce uniformity of opinion and practice, the glorious unity of the church of Christ was invaded and destroyed by the very means devised to preserve it.

The wretched state of division which still subsists in the Christian church, is chiefly owing to the continuance of these causes. Terms of communion, entirely of human framing, continue to enclose and hedge up the several parties into which the Christian world is divided, and to keep them separate from one another. God is not sufficiently trusted to take care of his own cause, and to preserve his kingdom from ruin. Man must devise his schemes of preservation and enlargement, must interpose the use of his power and the dictum of his authority to maintain unity and peace. In the mean time, all is weakness, alienation, and anarchy.

It can scarcely be doubted, that if Christians acted more according to their own feelings, and less under the influence of authority, custom, or interest, a different state of things would soon appear. Did they consult the Scriptures more, and human opinion less; were it their sole object to ascertain facts and principles as the groundwork of their own obedience, instead of looking for the confirmation of hypotheses, or for arguments to justify received systems; and did they, in connexion with this conduct, determine to hold fellowship with all whom they could regard as holding the same Head, substantial unity in the church of Christ would soon be again restored. But if men will give up nothing that they have been taught by tradition or authority to receive; if a difference of opinion on some of the five points is deemed incompatible with the acknowledgment of the Christian character; if the ministry of a servant of Christ is considered invalid, unless he has received it from episcopal or presbyterian hands; if Christian communion is made dependent on submission to a particular form of baptism, or a particular mode of observing the Lord's supper; if all churches must be regarded as sectarian and schismatical which are not established by human laws; then, while these things are thus viewed and maintained, it would be absurd to look for love and union among the followers of Christ.

"If we consult the Scriptures," says an eloquent writer, "we shall be at no loss to perceive that the unity of the

church is not merely a doctrine most clearly revealed, but that its practical exemplification is one of the principal designs of the Christian dispensation. We are expressly told that our Saviour purposed by his death, to 'gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,' and for the accomplishment of this design, he interceded during his last moments, in language which instructs us to consider it as the grand means of the conversion of the world. His prophetic anticipations were not disappointed; for while a visible unanimity prevailed amongst his followers, his cause everywhere triumphed: the concentrated zeal, the ardent co-operation of a comparative few, impelled by one spirit and directed to one object, were more than a match for hostile myriads. No sooner was the bond of unity broken by the prevalence of intestine quarrels and dissentions, than the interests of truth languished, until Mahometanism in the east, and Popery in the west, completed the work of deterioration, which the loss of primitive simplicity and love, combined with the spirit of intolerance, first commenced.

"If the religion of Christ ever resumes her ancient lustre, and we are assured by the highest authority she will, it must be by retracing our steps, by reverting to the original principles on which, considered as a social institution, it was founded. We must go back to the simplicity of the first ages—we must learn to quit a subtle and disputatious theology for a religion of love, emanating from a few divinely energetic principles which pervade almost every page of inspiration, and demand nothing for their cordial reception and belief, besides an humble and contrite heart. Reserving to ourselves the utmost freedom of thought in the interpretation of the sacred oracles, and pushing our inquiries, as far as our opportunities admit, into every department of revealed truth, we shall not dream of obtruding precarious conclusions on others as articles of faith, but shall receive, with open arms, all who appear to love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and find a sufficient bond of union, a sufficient scope for all our sympathies in the doctrine of the cross. If the Saviour appears to be loved, obeyed, and adored; if his blood is sprinkled on the conscience, and his Spirit resides in the heart, why should we be dissatisfied? We, who profess to be actuated by no other motive, to live to no other purpose, than the promotion of his interest."[1]

[1] Hall's 'Reply to Kinghorn,' p. 250—252. The work of the Rev. Robert

Concurring most cordially in the justice and importance of the sentiments thus admirably expressed, it is with great pleasure I bring before the reader the opinions of Baxter, on the subject of Catholic communion. Here he was greatly in advance of the age to which he belonged: for it will be found that his views did not altogether accord with those of any party during his own time; although there were a few persons who then held similar opinions. Rigid Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, all objected to some of his principles of religious fellowship, and to the great object of his efforts; yet a few of all these classes agreed with him on the main subject. That subject will probably be found to confer on Baxter, one of his most distinguished honours; that he was among the first of our countrymen, who advocated the broad and important principle, that the only term of communion in the Christian church ought to be a profession of the faith of Christ, worthy of credit; that we are bound to receive all whom God has received; to exclude those only whom he appears not to have approved; and that though there be considerable diversity of opinion, and even of practice, among such as expect to meet in heaven at last, they ought to acknowledge one another as Christians on earth, and to hold fellowship in all things in which they are agreed, and can walk together.

To produce this visible union among all true Christians was the great object to which Baxter may be said to have devoted his life. Most of his controversies arose out of his solicitude to accomplish this most desirable consummation; and he never failed more to his own mortification, than when he lost his labour on this object, or stirred up further strife. He studied it profoundly, he entered into the prosecution of it with the

Hall, A.M. from which the above quotation is made, as do his other publications in this controversy, well deserves to be consulted; for though they all chiefly refer to the subject of Baptism, his general principles admit of a much more extended application. The volume of Dr. Mason, formerly of New York, on the same subject, is also worthy of perusal. It is singular, that while Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents, have thus been gradually approximating to each other, and are likely to amalgamate finally into one body, Episcopacy does not appear to have advanced one step, or, in the slightest degree, to have lowered its tone or its pretensions. It is as lofty and unyielding at the present moment as it was in the days of Baxter. The ultimate effect of this on itself, and the other communities, it is not for me to predict; but should a general and cordial union of the other denominations eventually take place, and Episcopacy still refuse to acknowledge them as brethren, the question, who are the schismatics, will no longer be of difficult solution, and the issue of the contest will soon be decided.

utmost ardour; and from the first moment of his public life to the last he never lost sight of it.

The religious disorders and dissensions in the kingdom during the time of the civil wars, greatly affected him. In the army he spent several years of his ministry, endeavouring to subdue the spirit of division which he there witnessed. When he settled a second time at Kidderminster, he exerted himself to reconcile and harmonize all parties in the place; and succeeded. He corresponded privately with Gataker, Vines, Bishop Brownrig, Owen, Hammond, and other eminent men, on the terms and means of union. He then made some attempts with the ministers of his immediate neighbourhood, and at last extended the attempt to the county of Worcester at large; and was successful beyond his expectations. He aimed at nothing less than uniting, without requiring a compromise of principle, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, in one common fellowship, throughout the kingdom. To accomplish this object, he generalized the principles of communion, placing them on the simple ground of the sincere profession of our common Christianity; he inculcated strongly the doctrines of Christian liberty and forbearance; and endeavoured to lessen the confidence of the several parties in the divine right of their respective systems. He diligently sought out the things in which all Christians agree, and dwelt on their importance; he painted in the brightest colours the comparatively trivial nature of the things in which they differ; and represented in the strongest terms, the guilt, the folly, and the danger of maintaining divisive courses, or of living in alienation from Christian brethren.

The first work which he published on this highly interesting and important subject is one, in the authorship of which he had only a part, though that was a principal one, 'Christian Concord; or, the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire: with Richard Baxter's Explication and Defence of it, and his Exhortation to Unity.' 1653. 4to. It contains the propositions and rules adopted by the associated ministers, the profession of faith in which they agreed, and Baxter's explanations of some passages in the propositions and confession chiefly intended for the satisfaction of the people of Kidderminster.

This agreement resulted from a voluntary association of the ministers of the county of Worcester, formed chiefly by the exertions of Baxter, and among whom he acted as a sort of

moderator, or president, during most of the time which he spent at Kidderminster. The object of it was to promote ministerial intercourse and improvement; to assist each other in promoting the interests of religion and morality, and in maintaining discipline and order in their respective congregations. It was not strictly Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent. It was not Episcopal; for it acknowledged no superiority among the ministers. It was not Presbyterian, for it disclaimed the exercise of authority on the part of the associated ministers, and acknowledged the right of the people "to try and discern" the proceedings of the ministers. It was not Independent, because it recognised the right of ministers to act separately from the people, acknowledged the common parochial boundaries, and the magistrates' aid in certain cases. Yet does the whole constitution of this associated body, and its rules for the regulation of particular churches, correspond more with the voluntary character of Congregational churches than with any other system. This remark will apply generally to Baxter's sentiments on the subject of church-government and communion. He objected to being considered an Independent, as he objected to all party distinctions; but his writings and conduct were more in support of modified Independency than of any other system.

In confirmation and illustration of this point, I shall here give, from himself, an account of the system he pursued while at Kidderminster, though written long after he had left it. It presents before us the whole apparatus which he employed, and explains his general views of church-fellowship and ecclesiastical discipline. It shows that Baxter was the minister of a voluntary congregation, and pastor of a separate church, whose discipline was neither aided nor restrained by the civil powers, though Baxter was supported by the funds which belonged to the Establishment.

"When I undertook a parish charge myself, I kept with me two ministers, to assist me at one parish church and a small chapel. I had three godly justices of peace in the parish, who, to countenance our discipline, kept their monthly meeting at the same time and place. I had four ancient godly men that performed the office of deacons. I had above twenty of the seniors of the laity, who, without pretence of any office, met with us, to be witnesses that we did the church and sinners no wrong, and to awe the offenders by their presence. These met once a month

together. We had almost all the worthy ministers of the county agreeing and associated to do the like in their several parishes, as far as they were able, that unity might the more convince the offenders. We had, in the same town, the next day after our monthly town meeting, an assembly of a dozen or twenty such ministers, to edify each other, and that those might be tried by them and before them, whether we could persuade them to repentance, who would not be prevailed with by ourselves. And, what was our ease incomparably beyond all this, neither the times nor our judgment allowing us to use discipline upon any but such as consented to our office and relation to them, we told them that we had all agreed only to exercise so much of discipline, as Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Independent, had no controversy about (some of the Episcopal joining us); and that we would exercise it in all our flocks, but we could be pastors to none against their wills. Whereupon, of about three thousand persons, one thousand eight hundred or more of which were at age to be communicants, all refused to do any more than hear me preach, for fear of discipline, except about six hundred, or a few more. These six hundred were the most understanding, religious part of the parish: all the grossly ignorant, and the common swearers, and all the drunkards and scandalous persons, were among the refusers, except about five or six young men that had got such a love to tippling that they could not leave it. These hid their sin awhile, but could not long: yet the trouble and work that these five or six men made us, sometimes by drunkenness, sometimes by fighting, sometimes by slandering their neighbours, or such-like, were more than it is easy for an unexperienced person to believe. So hard was it to bring them to a confession of their sins, or to ask their forgiveness whom they grossly wronged, that when we endeavoured, with all our skill, to convince them, and used gentle exhortation, and also opened to them the terrors of the Lord; when we prayed before them that God would give them repentance; when their own parents and relations joined with us; all would not make them confess their sin, but we were forced to cast them out of our communion, for the most part of them. Among all the rest, there were some that sometimes would need admonition and reconciliation with one another, which found us some work. But if we had been troubled with all the other thousand or twelve hundred of the parish, and so with all the other swearers, railers, common drunkards,

some infidels, &c., what work should we have had! So much as I dare confidently say that, without being half so strict and troublesome as the ancient canons were, we could not possibly have done more in the work of discipline than govern one parish. Nor could we have done so much, but with such omissions as nothing but disability would have quieted our consciences under."[k]

This extract presents a very clear and succinct view of the system Baxter acted on while minister of Kidderminster, and it may be regarded as embodying the principles of communion which he advocated to the close of his life. His church, it is evident, was a voluntary association, distinct from the people of the parish, and from the general congregation. To this select body he dispensed the ordinances of the Gospel, and on its members alone he exercised the discipline of the kingdom of heaven. At the same time, he was regarded, in some sense, as the parochial clergyman, and was countenanced in various ways by the magistrates. His brethren in the ministry, and himself, formed also a voluntary association for mutual counsel and aid in their general work; and to enforce, by their combined influence, such measures as, individually, they might have found it difficult to carry. The state of the times, as has been remarked in another place, enabled Baxter and his brethren to pursue a line of conduct, which, either as ministers of a regular establishment, or as dissenters from it, they could not have done.

Of the publication of his 'Christian Concord,' he says, "When we set on foot our association in Worcestershire,[l] I was desired to print our agreement, with an explication of the several articles, which I did in a small book, in which I have given the reasons why the Episcopal, Presbyterians, and Independents, might and should unite, on such terms, without any change of any of their principles; but I confess that the new Episcopal party, that follow Grotius too far, and deny the very being of all the ministers and churches that have not diocesan bishops, are not capable of union with the rest upon such terms. And hereby I gave notice to the gentry and others of the royalists in England, of the great danger they were in of changing

[k] 'Treatise of Episcopacy,' pp. 185, 186.

[l] In the Appendix to his Life there is inserted a long paper of reply to some exceptions against the 'Worcestershire Agreement,' and 'Christian Concord,' written by a nameless author, and sent by Dr. Warmstrye. The author I suppose to have been Warmstrye himself.

their ecclesiastical cause, by following new leaders that were for Grotianism. But this admonition did greatly offend the guilty, who now began to get the reins, though the old Episcopal Protestants confessed it all to be true. There is nothing bringeth greater hatred and sufferings on a man than to foreknow the mischief that men in power are doing and intend, and to warn the world of it: for while they are resolutely going on with it, they will proclaim him a slanderer that revealeth it, and use him accordingly; and never be ashamed when they have done it, and thereby declare all which he foretold to be true." [m]

He published in 1656, 'The Agreement of divers Ministers in the county of Worcester, and some adjacent parts, for catechising or personal instructing all in their several parishes that will consent thereunto.' 12mo. This is a small production entirely practical in its nature, containing the articles of their agreement, an exhortation to the people to submit to the necessary work of catechising, and the profession of faith and catechism, which they were expected to make and learn. In consequence of Baxter's influence and example, the ministers who signed this agreement, and many others, adopted the practice of catechising their congregations, which it was the chief object of the Agreement to promote. Speaking on this subject, in reference to himself, he says,

"Of all the works that ever I attempted, this yielded me most comfort in the practice of it. All men thought that the people, especially the ancienter sort, would never have submitted to this course, and so that it would have come to nothing: but God gave me a tractable, willing people, and gave me also interest in them; and when I had begun, and my people had given a good example to other parishes, and especially the ministers so unanimously concurring, that none gainsayed us, it prevailed with the parishes about. I set two days a week apart for this employment; my faithful, unwearied assistant and myself, took fourteen families every week; those in the town came to us to our houses; those in the parish my assistant went to, to their houses, besides what a curate did at a chapelry. First they recited the catechism to us, a family only being present at a time, and no stranger admitted: after that, I first helped them to understand it, and next inquired modestly into the state of their souls, and lastly endeavoured to set all home to the convincing, awakening, and resolving, of their hearts ac-

[m] Life, part i. pp. 112, 113.

cording to their several conditions; bestowing about an hour and the labour of a sermon with every family. I found it so effectual, through the blessing of God, that few went away without some seeming humiliation, conviction, and purpose, and promise for a holy life. Except half a dozen or thereabouts of the most ignorant and senseless, all the families in the town came to me; and though the first time, they came with fear and backwardness; after that, they longed for their turn to come again. So that I hope God did good to many by it: and yet this was not all the comfort I had in it." [o]

The practice referred to was one of the most important means of Baxter's usefulness while in Kidderminster. It brought him into contact with every family and individual in his parish, which, with the fidelity of his addresses to them, was productive of the most salutary results. His connexion with the Worcestershire Union, and the little publication of which we have just spoken, led to his being appointed to deliver an address to his ministerial brethren, which afterwards appeared in the shape of 'The Reformed Pastor,' one of the most valuable of all his publications.

His next work, in this class, is a considerable quarto volume, entitled, 'Certain Disputations of Right to Sacraments, and the True Nature of Visible Christianity, &c.' 1656. The nature and object of this book I shall leave himself to explain. The following passage will show that Baxter held sentiments respecting the purity of Christian fellowship, which were not consistent with the practice of the church of England.

"Mr. Blake having replied to some things in my Apology, especially about right to the sacraments, or the just subjects of baptism and the Lord's-supper, I wrote five disputations on those points, proving that it is not the reality of a dogmatical or justifying faith, nor yet the profession of bare assent, called a dogmatical faith by many; but only the profession of a saving faith, which is the condition of men's title to church communion *coram ecclesia;* and that hypocrites are but analogically or equivocally called Christians, believers, and saints, &c. with much more to decide the most troublesome controversy of that time, which was about the necessary qualification and title of church-members and communicants. Many men have been perplexed about that point and that book. Some think it cometh too near the Independents, and some, that it is too

[o] Life, part i. pp. 179, 180.

far from them; and many think it very hard that a credible profession of true faith and repentance should be made the stated qualification: because they think it incredible that all the Jewish members were such. But I have sifted this point more exactly and diligently, in my thoughts, than any other controversy whatsoever; and fain I would have found some other qualification to take up with: Either the profession of some lower faith than that which hath the promise of salvation. Or, at least such a profession of saving faith as needeth not to be credible at all. But the evidence of truth hath forced me from all other ways, and suffered me to rest no where but here. That profession should be made necessary without any respect at all to credibility, and consequently to the verity of the faith professed, is incredible, and a contradiction, and the very word profession signifieth more. I was forced to observe that those who in charity would believe another profession to be the title to church communion do greatly cross their own design of charity. While they would not be bound to believe men to be what they profess, for fear of excluding many whom they cannot believe, they do leave themselves and all others as not obliged to love any church member as such, with the love which is due to a true Christian, but only with such a love as they owe to the members of the devil; and so deny them the kernel of charity, by giving the shell to a few more than they should do. *Whereas, upon my deepest search, I am satisfied that a credible profession of true Christianity is it that denominateth the adult visible Christian.*"[p]

There may be some theoretical difference of opinion among Christians about what is included in, or essential to, a credible profession, but, generally speaking, religious persons commonly agree in their opinion of those who are entitled to be regarded as Christians. Now if this kind of profession is held to be necessary to Christian communion, it is at once obvious that the principles of the church of England make no suitable provision for their operation. There is not in that establishment any line of demarcation between the openly profane or worldly, and the people of God. The evidence of the possession of true religion is not in it, the condition of enjoying even the most sacred ordinances. On this point therefore, Baxter approached nearer to the Independents than he seemed willing to avow; and his practice while at Kidderminster appears to have corresponded with his theoretical views on this subject. In a parish consisting of seve-

[p] Life, part i. pp. 113, 114.

ral thousands, with a regular congregation of about eighteen hundred persons, there were only about six hundred whom he regarded as church members, to whom he administered the ordinances of the Gospel; and such was his regard to character, that he declared there were not a dozen of those persons in whose piety he had not great confidence.

The discussions of this volume, therefore, are of great importance; and, on the several points of which it treats, the reader who is desirous of knowing Baxter's sentiments, or of forming his own, may consult it to advantage. The following are the leading topics: "Whether ministers may admit persons into the church of Christ by baptism, upon the bare, verbal profession of the true Christian, saving faith, without staying for, or requiring any further evidences of, sincerity?" This he determines in the affirmative. "Whether ministers must or may baptize the children of those that profess not saving faith, upon the profession of any other faith that comes short of it?" This he resolves in the negative. "Whether the infants of notoriously ungodly baptized parents have right to be baptized? Whether any besides regenerate believers and their seed have a right to the sacraments, given them by God, and may thereupon require them and receive them?" Both these questions he answers negatively. "Whether hypocrites, and other unregenerate persons, be called church members, Christians, believers, saints, adopted, justified, &c.; univocally, analogically, or equivocally?"

Into all these subjects he enters very fully, but in his characteristic manner; dividing, distinguishing, and explaining, till he leaves it sometimes doubtful how he is to be understood, unless we advert to his own practice. What is dubious in his theoretical discussions, may thus be easily explained. Baxter did not regard differences of opinion on various doctrinal questions, or respecting church government of much importance, while he could regard the parties as real Christians, and disposed to live in peace with others. To these two points he considered all other things subordinate. Christian fellowship, with him, was not the fellowship of Calvinists or Arminians, of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists; it was the fellowship of Christians, holding the one faith and hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, in unity of spirit, and righteousness of life. This is the only Catholic communion which is worth contending for; and which, it cannot be doubted, will, in due time, absorb all other party distinctions and disputes.

The only book which discusses the principles of this work of Baxter's, known to me, is the 'Cœna quasi Koine; or, the New Closures broken down, and the Lord's Supper laid forth in common for all Church Members having a Dogmatical Faith.' By William Morice, esq. of Werrington. 1657. 4to. It is not a professed answer to Baxter, but takes up the ground with a vast profusion of miscellaneous learning. The author was quite an Erastian, on the subject of church government, and contended for principles which are utterly destructive of all discipline, except as administered by the civil magistrate. He was knighted by Charles II. at his landing, and occupied the important post of Secretary of State for seven years after the Restoration. The work above-mentioned is a great curiosity for the display of classical reading which it affords. Every page is stuck full of learned quotation, evincing the knowledge of the author, but affording small evidence of his judgment. He bestows a laboured panegyric on Baxter, which, if it were not too long, I would introduce, both as an illustration of the character of the book, and of the admiration in which Baxter was held by him.

In the preface to the second edition of his 'Five Disputations,' Baxter refers to this work of Mr. Morice. "When I saw this book," he says, "made up of so much reading, and expressing so much industry and learning, I much rejoiced that England had such a gentleman; and I look on the book as a shaming reprehension of the idleness and ignorance of the multitude of the gentry who spend that time in hawking, and hunting, and complimenting, which, if better spent, might make them a blessing, and not a burden, to the land. But out of that learned volume, I am not able to find any clear discovery of what the author means by a dogmatical faith." Baxter thinks that Morice did not differ widely from himself; and Morice was exceedingly averse to being considered as an adversary to Baxter. The principles contended for by the two writers could not fail to be productive of very different results in practice. Baxter could only approve of select communion; Morice maintained open and promiscuous.[q]

[q] Beside the main questions discussed in this work of Baxter's, there is a great deal of wrangling debate with Dr. Owen and others; particularly at the end, where he assigns reasons for making no answer to Mr. Robertson, or a more particular reply to Mr. Blake, or Dr. Owen. It would only distract the attention of the reader from the main subject of the chapter to refer to these personal debates, and therefore I have not adverted to them in the text.

The next work in this class which claims our attention, is 'Confirmation and Restauration the necessary means of Reformation and Reconciliation.'[r] The work, with this rather singular and alliteral title, appeared in 12mo, in 1658. Its connexion with Baxter's views of Catholic communion is at once obvious from the scope of the book, and from his own account of it. "Having in divers writings," he says, "moved for the restitution of a solemn transition of all that pass from an infant state of church-membership into the number of the adult, and are admitted to their privileges; and the associated ministers of this county having made it an article of their agreement, at last came forth an excellent exercitation on confirmation, written by Mr. Jonathan Hanmer, very learnedly and piously endeavouring the restoration of this practice.[s] Being very glad of so good a work, upon an invitation, I prefixed an epistle before it, which hath occasioned this following disputation. For when the book was read, the design was generally approved, as far as I can learn, and very acceptable to good men of all parties. But many of them called to me to try whether some more Scripture proofs might not be brought for it, that the preceptive, as well as the mediate necessity, might appear. At the desire of some reverend, godly brethren, I hastily drew up this, which is here offered you, partly to satisfy them in the point of Scripture evidence, but principally to satisfy my own earnest desires after the reformation and healing of the churches, to which I do very confidently apprehend this excellent work to have a singular tendency. Here is a medicine so effectual to heal our breaches, and set our disordered societies in joint, being owned in whole by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Erastian, and in half by the Anabaptists. Thus, nothing but our own self-conceitedness, perverseness, laziness, or wilful enmity to the peace of the churches, is able to deprive us of a blessed success. But, alas, our minds are the subjects of disease, and are so alienated, exulcerated, and so selfishly partial and uncharitable, that when the plaster is offered us, and peace brought to our doors, I must needs expect that many should peevishly cast it away, and others betray it by a lazy commendation, and so dis-

[r] Works, vol. xiv.

[s] The book of Hanmer, adverted to by Baxter, is 'An Exercitation upon Confirmation, the ancient way of completing Church Members.' 1656. 8vo. The author was minister of Bishop's Tawton, in Devonshire, from which he was ejected in 1662. He was an Episcopalian, though a Nonconformist, and a man of very good learning.

able the few that would be faithful, practical, and industrious, from that general success which is so necessary and desirable."[t]

The title of this work might lead the reader to suppose that it was a defence of the episcopal rite of confirmation, whereas it is, in fact, nothing more than a laboured effort to prove that all who are baptized in infancy ought to make a personal and public profession of religion when they come to the years of maturity; and that unless this profession is satisfactory to the minister of the congregation to which the party propose to belong, they ought not to enjoy the Lord's-supper, or be considered members of the church. His fifth proposition may be said to embrace the whole subject: "As a personal faith is the condition before God, of title to the privileges of the adult; so the profession of this faith is the condition of his right before the church; and without this profession, he is not to be taken as an adult member, nor admitted to the privileges of such."[u]

As Episcopalians consider confirmation an ordinance of Christianity, Baxter endeavours to show that this is the only scriptural notion of confirmation. He does not object to the laying on of hands, provided the persons themselves agreed to it, or thought it necessary, but does not regard it as essential. And so far from thinking that only diocesan bishops have a right to confirm,[x] he shows, that it belongs to all ministers or pastors of the church, and that in fact they alone can properly exercise it, as they alone can know who deserve to be thus treated. As Presbyterians require a personal profession, and Independents a

[t] Works, vol. xiv. pp. 403, 404.

[u] Ibid. p. 414.

[x] So far from having great respect for episcopal confirmation, he tells the following story of his own confirmation:—"When I was a school-boy, about fifteen years of age, the bishop coming into the county, many went to him to be confirmed; we that were boys ran out to see the bishop among the rest, not knowing any thing of the meaning of the business. When we came thither we met about thirty or forty in all, of our own stature and temper, that had come to be *bishopped*, as then it was called. The bishop examined us, not at all in one article of faith, but in a church-yard; in haste we were set in a rank, and he passed hastily over us, laying his hands on our heads, and saying a few words, which neither I, nor any that I spoke with, understood, so hastily were they uttered, and a very short prayer recited, and there was an end. But whether we were Christians, or infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the bishop little knew nor inquired. And yet he was esteemed one of the best bishops in England. And though the canons require that the curate or minister send a certificate that the children have learned the catechism, there was no such thing done, but we ran of our own accord to see the bishop only, and almost all the rest of the county had not this much; this was the old careless practice of this excellent duty of confirmation."—*Works*, vol. xiv. pp. 481, 482.

still more particular profession of personal religion in order to church membership; he endeavours to show that all the parties, not excluding Baptists, might easily harmonize on this subject, and that thus a line of demarcation between the world would be clearly and beneficially established. The object he had in view is certainly of great importance, but until the parties whom he wished to unite be agreed on some other important points than those which his discussion directly embraces, they are not likely to be united by agreement on such a rite or service as that in question. It may be the effect of reformation, but is not likely to be the cause or the means of it.[y]

Closely connected with the treatises on Right to Sacraments, and Confirmation, is the next work of Baxter in this department, 'Five Dissertations of Church Government and Worship.' 4to. 1659. The design of this, as of all Baxter's works in this class, was to promote union and reconciliation among all parties. This object, however desirable in itself, has not yet been attained in the Christian church; nor were the means employed by Baxter always most wisely adapted to promote it, though most sincerely intended on his part. "In the first of these Disputations," he says, "I proved that the English diocesan prelacy is intolerable, which none hath answered. In the second, I have proved the validity of the ordination then exercised without diocesans in England, which no man hath answered, though many have urged men to be re-ordained. In the third, I have proved that there are divers sorts of episcopacy lawful and desirable. In the fourth and fifth, I show the lawfulness of some ceremonies, and of a liturgy, and what is unlawful here.

"This book being published when bishops, liturgy, and ceremonies, were most decried and opposed, was of good use to declare my judgment when the king came in; for if I had said as much then, I had been judged but a temporizer. But as it was effectual to settle many in a moderation, so it made abundance of Conformists afterwards, or was pretended at least to give them satisfaction. Though it never meddled with the greatest parts of conformity, renouncing vows, assent and consent to all things in three books, &c.; and though it unanswerably confuted our prelacy and re-ordination, and consequently

[y] This book Calamy says is highly commended by Dr. Patrick, the bishop of Ely, in his work, intitled 'Aqua Genitalis.'—*Calamy's Abridgment*, vol. i. p. 413.

the renunciation of the vow against prelacy; and opposed the cross in baptism. But, *sic vitant stulti vitia*, as my Aphorisms made some Arminians; if you discover an error to an injudicious man, he reeleth into the contrary error, and it is hard to stop him in the middle verity."[2]

This statement, by himself, of the subject and design of the work, is sufficient to explain its nature. Could Baxter have succeeded in getting Episcopalians to give up all that is peculiar in Episcopacy; and Presbyterians all that is peculiar to Presbyterianism; and Independents all that is distinctive in Independency, he would have succeeded in producing some agreement in a simple and practical system of church order and government. This consummation, however, is yet to come. If only pious persons were concerned in such matters; if there were no secular obstacles and interests in the way; if the doctrine of authority, and the influence of this world, were withdrawn, the church of Christ would probably soon assume a very different appearance from what it has yet done. Baxter's grand objection to many of those things, about which men then differed, was, their unqualified and unscriptural enforcement. He puts the case very admirably, and with some humour, in the following passage.

"I confess it is lawful for me to wear a helmet on my head in preaching; but it were not well if you would institute the wearing of a helmet, to signify our spiritual militia, and then resolve that all shall be silenced and imprisoned during life that will not wear it. It is lawful for me to use spectacles, or to go on crutches; but will you therefore ordain that all men shall read with spectacles, to signify our want of spiritual sight, and that no man shall go to church but on crutches, to signify our disability to come to God of ourselves. So, in circumstantials, it is lawful for me to wear a feather in my hat, and a hay-rope for a girdle, and a hair-cloth for a cloak: but if you should ordain that if any man serve God in any other habit, he shall be banished, or perpetually imprisoned, or hanged; in my opinion, you did not well: especially, if you add that he that disobeyeth you must also incur everlasting damnation. It is in itself lawful to kneel when we hear the Scriptures read, or when we sing psalms; but yet it is not lawful to drive all from hearing and singing, and lay them in prison that do it not kneeling. And why men should have no communion in the

[2] Life, part i. pp. 117, 118.

Lord's-supper that receive it not kneeling, or in any one commanded posture, and why men should be forbidden to preach the Gospel that wear not a linen surplice, I cannot imagine any such reason as will hold weight at the bar of God."[a]

This work is dedicated to his "Highness, Richard, Lord Protector." A few sentences from this document will show the feelings of Baxter towards Richard Cromwell, and what, according to him, were the feelings of the country.

"These papers are ambitious of accompanying those against Popery into your highness's presence, for the tender of their service, and that upon the same account. The controversies here decided are those that have had a hand in most of the great transactions that, of late years, have here passed, and that still have a hand in the differences that hinder our desired peace. I observe that the nation, generally, rejoiceth in your peaceable entrance upon the government; and are affected with indignation if they hear but any rumours that troublesome persons would disturb their hopes. And many are persuaded that you have been strangely kept from participating in any of our late bloody contentions, that God might make you the healer of our breaches, and employ you in that temple work, which David himself might not be honoured with, though it was in his mind, because he had shed blood abundantly and made great wars."[b]

While this passage shows the good feeling towards Richard Cromwell by which Baxter was influenced, and that he could readily submit to his government, it also shows, in connexion with what follows of the dedication, and with many parts of the book, his anxiety to get the magistrate to interfere, to put an end to religious differences, and to establish something like a uniform system. His leaning to this kind of interference often led him to write inconsistently with his better and more scriptural views. He would have been content with a very moderate system of state administration; but even the most moderate, according to his views, would have produced effects, of which he would have been the first to complain. Till magistrates are left to manage the affairs of this world, and the church left to manage its own affairs, and to provide for its own interests, under the direction of Scripture and the influence of Christ's authority and Spirit, it is vain to expect any thing like general agreement or harmony among the subjects of the

[a] Works, vol. xiv. pp. 430, 431. [b] Ibid. pp. 1, 2.

same kingdom. The interference of worldly men with the church of Christ must, of necessity, be injurious to it; while the parties who admit this interference on the one hand, and those who decline it on the other, are placed on an unequal footing, and contend on unequal terms.

Baxter was not the only labourer in the cause of peace and of catholic communion. One other individual at least entered fully and cordially into his views, and devoted much time and labour to promote them, not in England only, but throughout Protestant Europe. The following Tract of Baxter's is connected with his exertions in this cause: 'The Judgment and Advice of the Associated Ministers of Worcestershire, concerning Mr. John Dury's Endeavours after Ecclesiastical Peace.' 1658. 4to. The account given by the author of this small publication, is as follows:—"Mr. John Dury having spent thirty years in endeavours to reconcile the Lutherans and Calvinists, was now going over sea again in that work, and desired the judgment of our association, how it should be successfully expedited; which at their desire I drew up more largely in Latin, and more briefly in English. The English letter he printed, as my letter to Mr. Dury for pacification."[c]

Of the respectable individual who spent so many years in the interesting work of reconciliation, it is impracticable to give any satisfactory account. He appears to have been a native of Scotland, but resided many years in Germany. In the year 1628, he was minister to the English Company of Merchants at Elbing, in Prussia, and was then led, through the influence of the learned and excellent Dr. Godeman, a privy counseller to Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, to engage along with him in an attempt to unite the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. They held conferences on this subject with the Chancellor Oxenstiern, who encouraged them in their attempt. Dury petitioned Gustavus to lend his aid. Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador from Great Britain to Sweden and Poland, was consulted, and interested himself in the affair; and having promised to engage the English bishops to consider the subject, Mr. Dury left Elbing in 1630 for England. Sir Thomas Roe recommended the business to the king, who referred it to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, requiring them to hear Dury's proposals. They heard him accordingly, professed to be friends to his project, and seemed to adopt some of his recommendations. To pre-

[c] Life, part i. p. 117.

pare the way for future treaties, it was proposed that the magistrates on both sides should prohibit railing disputes in the pulpit; should put down all party names, as far as they could, and not suffer any debates about ceremonies or forms of public worship.

The good man, flattered by these attentions, prosecuted his enterprise with great vigour. He returned to the Continent, and addressed the confederated ambassadors of the Protestant states, assembled at Frankfort, entreating their aid and countenance. They promised fair, but did nothing. He visited Holland on his errand of peace; and in 1633 returned to England, where he found Laud in the place of Abbot, to whom he presented his letters from foreign churches and divines. Laud did not appear to oppose, but gave no hearty encouragement. He met with more active assistance from Bishops Hall and Davenant, and Archbishop Usher. Again, he went to Germany, and met the Protestant ambassadors at Frankfort in 1634, by whom his object seemed to be patronized. He returned to England the following year, and was graciously received by the king; after which, he went back to Holland, and visited the different synods; and proceeded thence to Sweden, in which he laboured and travelled a great deal. Having again visited Germany, he went to Denmark; and after many other sojournings, returned to England once more in 1641. He was one of the extra number added to the Westminster Assembly, whose labours he assisted, being rather inclined to the side of the Independents. He lived till after the Restoration, but failed in the accomplishment of the grand object so dear to his heart; though he seems to have been useful in softening prejudices which he could not altogether subdue. In some respects, he appears to have resembled Baxter himself. He was a powerful advocate for ecclesiastical peace—a man of schemes and projects—of pure intentions, but of more zeal than judgment—who thought he could accomplish a great deal by meetings of ecclesiastics, and determinations of governments in matters of religion. As the friend of Baxter and Boyle, Usher and Hall, and many other good men, he deserved some notice in this place. He published a variety of small treatises, most of which related to his main undertaking.[d]

[d] The principal part of the above account of Dury is taken from a scarce tract published by Hartlib, the friend of Milton, entitled 'A Briefe Relation of that which hath been lately attempted to procure Ecclesiastical Peace among Protestants.' London. 1641. 4to. At the end of it is a copy of the petition presented to Gustavus Adolphus by Dury.—See also *Brookes's Lives of the Puritans*, vol. iii. p. 369.

The order of time requires that I should notice the next small treatise of Baxter, in this place. His 'Universal Concord,' which was published in 12mo, in 1658. "Having been desired," he says, "in the time of our associations, to draw up those terms which all Christian churches may hold communion upon, I published them, though too late for any such use (till God give men better minds), that the world might see what our religion and our terms of communion were; and that, if after-ages prove more peaceable, they may have some light from those that went before them. It consisteth of three parts.

"The first containeth the Christian religion, which all are positively to profess; that is, either to subscribe the Scriptures in general, and the ancient creeds in particular, or, at most, the confession or articles annexed: *e. g.*, I do believe all the sacred, canonical Scripture, which all Christian churches do receive; and, particularly, I believe in God the Father Almighty, &c. The second part, instead of books of unnecessary canons, containeth seven or eight points of practice for church order, which, so it be practised, it is no great matter whether it be subscribed or not. And here it must be understood, that these are written for times of liberty, in which agreement, rather than force, doth procure unity and communion. The third part containeth the larger description of the office of the ministry, and, consequently, of all the ordinances of worship, which need not be subscribed, but none should preach against it, nor omit the practice, except peace require that the point of infant baptism be left free.

"This small book is called by the name of Universal Concord, which, when I wrote, I thought to have published a second part, viz., a large volume, containing the particular terms of concord between all parties capable of concord; but the change of the times hath necessarily changed that purpose." [e]

Though Baxter did not publish formally a second part of this work, every thing he had to communicate on the subject, must have been presented in one or other of the numerous books which he subsequently published on the subject of communion, or of nonconformity. It is really not matter of regret that he did not publish more, but that he published so much on these topics, as the very quantity which he wrote may be said to have buried his sentiments, and materially contributed to defeat his own purpose and anxious desire. Any one of his principal

[e] Life, part i. pp. 119, 120.

treatises might have exhausted the subject, had it been judiciously managed; but it is now vain to express our regrets.

The works we have noticed, include all that Baxter published on the subject of catholic communion, previously to the Restoration. In his own Life, a variety of papers and letters are inserted, relating to the topic. They contain his proposals to several parties, or to eminent individuals among them, adapted to the peculiar sentiments and circumstances of each. He did not always succeed, but was always heard respectfully, and seldom failed to make some impression in favour of peace. From the progress made by his system in various quarters, it is hard to say what might have been the final result, had the political state of the country not undergone a complete change by the overthrow of the dynasty of the Cromwells, and the return of Charles. On the diocesan Episcopalians, Baxter had found the greatest difficulty in making a favourable impression, even while the fortunes of their church were in the lowest state. Their principles seemed not to admit of union and co-operation with others. Many of the Baptists and Independents he found it difficult to convince that his way was preferable to theirs; but still his success among them was enough to encourage him to go on. The church party, however, offered him little hope before, and, after the Restoration, none at all.

That event did not terminate the labours of Baxter to promote unity, but for awhile they were necessarily diverted into a new channel. The comprehension of the Nonconformists in the church, by the modification of its terms, became the great object of his zealous endeavours for many years. What he did to accomplish it, and to prevent an entire and permanent secession from the church, with the causes of his failure, we have elsewhere recorded. If Baxter had not had to struggle with secular power and interests, but only to maintain the conflict with those who had as little civil connexion with the state as himself, the probability is that some such system as he himself acted upon in Kidderminster, would have been very generally adopted over England. Without professing to approve of all its parts, its substance is so radically Christian, and its effects were so excellent, that the individual who could not have lived in such a communion, must have had a very obtuse understanding, or an unenviable state of moral feeling. The prevalence of such a system, would have converted England into a spiritual

paradise, and caused its most barren deserts to flourish as the garden of the Lord.

The mortification which such a man as Baxter must have experienced from the failure and ruin of all his labours and hopes, may be better conceived than expressed. Though not easily or soon discouraged, he found, after the Restoration, and especially after the Bartholomew ejection, that he was left to contend with men of a totally different spirit from himself, men of secular views and feelings, who regarded the church but as a theatre of ambition, or in subservience to their earthly interests. He became one of a small but noble band of sufferers, who always appear to advantage, except when they attempt to identify themselves with a body so entirely worldly as was the church of England while Charles II. was its head, and Sheldon the chief minister of its spiritual affairs.

About the time of the Restoration, Baxter brought out two small practical works on his favourite subject. The titles might lead us to suppose that he had a special reference to Popery in them; but this is not the case any further than he regarded it as one of the sects, and that the most dangerous and dogmatical, which divided the church. The first of these is, 'The true Catholic, and Catholic Church described; and the vanity of the Papists, and all Schismatics that confine the Catholic Church to their sect, discovered and shamed.' 1660. 12mo.—The second is, 'Catholic Unity, or the only way to bring us all to be of one religion.' 1660. 12mo.[1] These are plain practical discourses, the substance of which had been preached in London and Worcester, containing much that is calculated to be useful to Christians of all professions. He tells us that their object is,

"For catholicism against all *sects*, to show the sin, and folly, and mischief, of all sects that would appropriate the church to themselves, and trouble the world with the question, Which of all these parties is the church? as if they knew not that the catholic church is that whole which containeth all the parts, though some are more pure, and some less. Especially, it is suited against the Romish claim, which damneth all Christians besides themselves, and it detecteth and confuteth dividing principles. For I apprehend it is a matter of great necessity to imprint true catholicism on the minds of Christians; it being a most lamentable thing to observe how few Christians in the

[1] Works, vol. xvi.

world there be, that fall not into one sect or other, and wrong not the common interest of Christianity for the promoting of the interest of their sect. How lamentably love is thereby destroyed, so that most men think not that they are bound to love those as the members of Christ, who are against their party. The leaders of most sects do not stick to persecute those that differ from them, and think the blood of those who hinder their opinions, and parties, to be an acceptable sacrifice unto God. And if they can but get to be of a sect which they think the *holiest*, (as the Anabaptists and Separatists,) or which is *the largest*, (as the Greeks and Papists,) they think, then, that they are sufficiently warranted to deny others to be God's church, or at least to deny them Christian love and communion.

"To this small book I annexed a postscript against a ridiculous pamphlet of one *Malpas*, an old scandalous neighbour minister, who was permitted to stay in by the Parliament, (so far were they from being over-strict in their reformation of the clergy,) and now is a considerable man among them." [s]

A long interval elapsed before any thing further on this subject proceeded from Baxter's prolific pen. At length, in 1669, he published in octavo, his 'Cure for Church Divisions.' "I first published," he says, "some old notes, written eleven or twelve years ago, called 'Directions for Weak Christians,' and annexed to them 'The Character of a Sound Christian.' For both which I wrote what was as like to have exasperated the impatient as this book is, and yet I heard of no complaints. Afterwards I wrote this, and sent it to the licenser, who, upon perusal, refused to license it, and so it lay by, and I purposed to meddle with it no more. But leaving it in the bookseller's hands, who had offered it to be licensed, after a long time he got it done, and thus unexpectedly it revived.

"The reasons of my writing it were no fewer than all these following, which I now submit to the judgment of all men truly peaceable and impartial, who value the interests of Christianity, and of the universal church, above their own. To make my foregoing 'Directions to Weak Christians' more complete, having directed them about the private matters of their souls, I intended this as another part to direct them, in order to the church's peace. Many good people of tender consciences and weak judgments, desiring my advice about communion in the

[s] Life, part i. p. 112.

public assemblies, I found it meetest to publish this general advice for all, to save me the labour of speaking to particular persons, and to serve those that lived farther off. I saw those principles growing up apace in this time of provocation, which will certainly increase or continue our divisions, if they continue and increase. I am sure that our wounds are made by wounding principles of doctrine, and it must be healing doctrines that must heal us; and I know that we cannot be healed till doctrinal principles be healed. To give way to the prevalency of dividing opinions, is to give up our hopes of future unity and peace; and to give up our hopes of unity and peace, is to despair of all true reformation and happiness of the church on earth. If ever the church be reduced to that concord, strength, and beauty, which all true Christians do desire, I am past doubt that it must be by such principles as I have laid down.

"But my grand reason was, that I might serve the church of Christ in the reviving and preservation of Christian love. As it was an extraordinary measure of the Spirit which Christ made his witness in the gospel church, so it is as extraordinary a measure of love which he maketh the new commandment and the mark of all his true disciples. Whether afflicting on one side and unmerciful and unjust censures on the other side, one driving away, and the other flying away, be either a sign or means of love; and whether taking others to be intolerable in the church, and unworthy of our communion, and separating from or avoiding the worship where they are present, be likely to kindle love or kill it, let any man judge that hath himself the exercise of reason and unfeigned love.

"Another reason why I set upon this work was, because I saw few others would do it. If it must be done, and others will not, then I must take it for my duty. And, indeed, I knew but few whom I was willing to thrust upon it so forwardly as myself, for fear of being the author of their sufferings. Many may be abler, who are not in other respects so fit. Some ministers are young men, and likely to live longer to serve God in his church, and their reputation is needful to their success; if they be vilified, it may hinder their labours. And experience telleth us, that the dividing spirit is very powerful and victorious in censorious vilifying of dissenters. But I am almost *miles emeritus*, at the end of my work, and can reasonably expect to do but little more in the world, and therefore have not their impediment; and for popu-

lar applause, I have tried its vanity; I have had so much of it, till I am brought to a contempt if not a loathing of it.

"Some of my brethren have great congregations to teach, which are so inclined to this dividing way, that they cannot bear their information. And I will add one reason more of the publishing, though not of the writing, of my book. When it had been long cast by, I found in the 'Debater,' and 'Ecclesiastical Politician,' that the Nonconformists are made ridiculous and odious, as men of erroneous, uncharitable, and ungovernable principles and spirits, though they subscribe to all the doctrine of the church of England. And I thought that the publication of this book, would leave a testimony to the generations to come, by which they might know whether we were truly accused, and whether our principles were not as much for love and peace as theirs, and as consistent with order and government." [h]

Such are the chief of *twenty-seven* reasons, which Baxter assigns for writing his Cure. That Cure prescribes *sixty* directions to the people, and *twenty-two* additional ones to their pastors. It is full of excellent advice and admonition; but is both too general and too minute. It offended both parties, as the author anticipated; for he speaks too much as a dissenter for churchmen, and too much as a churchman for dissenters. He had an extensive knowledge of the evils and errors of all parties, on which he dwelt too largely; while he failed in adapting his remedies to the disease of which he so bitterly complains. [i]

Baxter met with an opponent of this work in a person whom he little expected to encounter. His former friend, Edward Bagshaw, published a reply to it with the following title: 'An Antidote against Mr. Baxter's palliated cure of church divisions; or an account of several weighty and just exceptions against that book.' 1670. 4to. Bagshaw was the son of an attorney at Broughton, and educated for the ministry, at Christ-church, Oxford. His fine talents, and extensive learning, qualified him to become second master of Westminster school, when

[h] 'Defence of the Principles of Love,' pp. 42—64.

[i] Among other attacks made on this work, was the following:—"A Pair of Spectacles, very usefull and needfull for all those that read Mr. Baxter's Catholick Charity, in his book called 'The Cure of Church Divisions,' that so they may see and understand the better what they read, and not be led away with error instead of truth. Written by a Lover of Truth and Peace, and of all the People of Peace." 1670. 4to.

Dr. Busby was head master. He occupied the parish of Ambrosden, in Oxfordshire, till the Bartholomew Act turned him out of the church, and left him to find a sphere of usefulness with the means of living among the Nonconformists. Bagshaw appears to have been an Independent in his principles; and was a man of great mental ardour and decision of character, which occasioned his being represented as hot-headed, turbulent, and fanatical. He suffered greatly for his principles, but nobly refused to sacrifice them to his interests or ambition.

He considered Baxter's 'Cure' as reflecting deeply on the dissenters; as calculated to aggravate their sufferings, and to justify their enemies in the severity they were inflicting on them. Though nothing was farther from Baxter's thoughts than this, Bagshaw had too much ground for alleging the injurious tendency of the book, on which he animadverted. He uses great freedom and plainness of speech with Baxter, and endeavour to show that his hard words and biting censures had exasperated the evil, instead of curing it.

Baxter lost no time in replying, which he did in his 'Defence of the Principles of Love, which are necessary to the unity and concord of Christians, and are delivered in a book called The Cure of Church Divisions. By Richard Baxter, one of the Mourners for a Self-dividing and Self-afflicting Land.' 1671. 8vo.

This volume is divided into two parts. After a long preface, comes "The general part, or Introduction to the Defence of the Cure of Church Divisions: being a narrative of those late actions which have occasioned the offence of men on both extremes; with the true reasons of them, and of these writings, which some count unseasonable; with the true stating of the case of that separation, which the opposed treatise meddleth with; and an answer to several great objections." Then comes the second part, or his 'Answer to the untrue and unjust exceptions of the Antidote.'

Bagshaw had taken forty-one exceptions to Baxter's 'Cure;' who accordingly replies to them *seriatim*. He addresses Bagshaw as his dear brother; but makes it his business to convict him "not of *mistakes*," lest the reader should not understand "whether it be mistakes of *reason* or *fact*;" nor will "he call them *lies*, because it is a provoking word; therefore *untruths* must be the middle term." He endeavours to show that, in what

he himself had written, he had been solely influenced by his desire of peace, and his utter aversion to all needless separations; and that Bagshaw had done injustice both to his principles and his dispositions, as well as to his writings. Speaking of his 'Cure,' and of Bagshaw's Answer to it, he says,

"When my 'Cure of Church Divisions' came out, the sober party of ministers were reconciled to it, especially the ancienter sort, and those that had seen the evils of separation; but some of the London ministers, who had kept up public assemblies, thought it should have been less sharp; and some thought, because they were under the bishops' severities, that it was unseasonable: for the truth is, most men judge by sense, and take that to be good or bad which they feel to do them good or hurt at the present. And because the people's alienation from the prelates, liturgy, and parish churches, did seem to make against the prelates, and to make for the Nonconformists' interest, they thought it not prudent to gratify the prelates so far as to gainsay it. So they considered not from whence dividing principles come, to what they tend, what a disgrace they are to our cause; how one of our own errors will hurt and disparage us more than all the cruelty of our adversaries, or that sinful means is seldom blessed to do good.

"When the book came out, the separating party, who had received before an odious character of it, did, part of them, read and interpret it by the spectacles and commentary of their passions and fore-conceits: and the most of them would not read it at all; but took all that they heard for granted. The hottest that was against it, was, Mr. Edward Bagshaw, a young man who had written formerly against monarchy, and afterwards written for me against Bishop Morley; and being of a resolute Roman spirit, was sent first to the Tower, and then laid in a horrid dungeon. He wrote against me a pamphlet so full of untruths and spleen, and so little pertinent to the cause, that I never met with a man who called for an answer to it; but yet the ill principles of it made me think that it needed an answer, which I wrote. But I found that party grown so tender, expecting little but to be applauded for their godliness, and to be flattered, while they expected that others should be most sharply dealt with; and, indeed, to be so utterly impatient of that language in a confutation which had any suitableness to the desert of their writings, that I purposed to give over all controversial writings

with them, or any other, without great necessity; and the rather, because my own style is apt to be guilty of too much freedom and sharpness in disputings." [k]

In answer to Baxter's 'Defence of the Principles of Love,' Bagshaw published 'A Defence of the Antidote.' 1671. 4to. This pamphlet I have not been able to procure; but the object of it seems to have been to retaliate on Baxter, to expose some of his inconsistencies, and to show that he who would prevent sin in others, must beware of casting stumbling-blocks before them.

This produced from Baxter 'A second Admonition to Mr. Bagshaw, written to call him to repentance for many false doctrines, crimes, and especially fourscore palpable untruths in matters of fact, published by him in two small libels.' 1671. 4to. The controversy was now become warm and personal. Baxter says, "Mr. Bagshaw wrote a second book against my Defence, full of untruths, which the furious temerarious man did utter, out of the rashness of his mind, which made him so little heed what he had read, and answered, as that one would scarce think he had ever read my book. I replied to him in an Admonition, telling him of his mistakes." [l]

Bagshaw met the second admonition by 'A Review; or all Mr. Baxter's Calumnies confuted;' to which Baxter finally rejoined in 'The Church told of Mr. Edward Bagshaw's Scandal, and warned of the dangerous snares of Satan now laid for them in his love-killing principles.' 1672. Unfortunately, both the church and the world had been told too much of this controversy already. Hard names and harsh censures are freely used by both parties, in a way which reflects no credit on either of them. In referring to his last publication on this controversy, Baxter mentions the death of his opponent, and expresses the pain which he then felt. "Mr. Bagshaw, in his rash and ignorant zeal, thinking it a sin to hear a Conformist, and that the way to deal with the persecutors, was, to draw all the people as far from them as he could, and not to hold any communion with any that did conform, having printed his third reviling libel against me, called for my third reply. But being printed without license, L'Estrange, the searcher, surprised part of it in the press, there being lately greater penalties laid on them that print without license than ever before. And about the day that it came out, Mr. Bagshaw died, a prisoner, though not in prison, which made it grievous to me to think that I must seem to write

[k] Life, part iii. pp. 72, 73. [l] Ibid. p. 85.

against the dead. While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies. And the safest passage thither is by peaceable holiness."[m]

I cannot take leave of Bagshaw, notwithstanding this unlovely debate with Baxter, without giving from Baxter himself a little more of his history. "After his ejection by the Act of Uniformity, he went over into Ireland with the Earl of Anglesey, whose household chaplain he was, and having preached there sometime, and returning back, was apprehended and sent prisoner to the Tower; where he continued long, till his means were all spent; and how he afterwards procured bread, I know not. When he had been prisoner about a year, it seems he became acquainted with Mr. Davis, who was also a prisoner in the Tower. This Mr. Davis having been very serviceable in the restoration of the king, and having laid out much of his estate for his service, thought he might be the bolder with his tongue and pen; and being of a spirit which some call undaunted, but others furious or indiscreet at best, did give an unmannerly liberty to his tongue, to accuse the court of such crimes, with such aggravations, as being a subject I think it not meet to name. At last, he talked so freely in the Tower also, that he was shipped away prisoner to Tangier in Africa. Mr. Bagshaw, being surprised by L'Estrange, and his chamber searched, there was found with him a paper, called Mr. Davis's case. Whereupon he was brought out to speak to the king, who examined him of whom he had that paper; but he refused to confess, and spake so boldly to the king, as much offended him: whereupon he was sent back to the Tower, and laid in a deep, dark, dreadful dungeon. When he had lain there three or four days and nights, without candle, fire, bed, or straw, he fell into a terrible fit, which the physicians thought did save his life; for the pain was so vehement, that it kept him in a sweat, which cast out the infection of the damp. At last, by the solicitation of his brother, who was a Conformist, and dearly loved him, he was taken up, and after that was sent away to Southsea Castle, an unwholesome place in the sea by Portsmouth; where, if he be alive, he remaineth close prisoner to this day, with Vavasour Powel, a preacher in North Wales, and others; speeding worse than Mr. Crofton, who was at last released."[n]

The sufferings of Bagshaw did not terminate here. He

[m] Life, part iii. p. 89. [n] Life, part ii. pp. 378, 379.

was released from this imprisonment, which appears to have been very long; but after returning to London, according to Wood, "he fell to his old trade of conventicling and raising sedition, for which, being ever and anon troubled, he had at length the oaths of allegiance and supremacy tendered to him; but he, boggling at them at first, and afterwards denying to take them, was committed prisoner to Newgate, where he continued twenty-two weeks before his death."[o] This event took place on the 28th of December, 1671. He was buried in Bunhill-fields; and, as a proof of the estimation in which he was held, his funeral was attended by nearly a thousand Protestant dissenters. The inscription on his monument, written by Dr. Owen, expresses the high opinion which he entertained of his faith, courage, and patience; and the unmerited sufferings which he had endured from '*the reproaches of pretended friends*,' as well as the persecutions of professed adversaries.[p] I have thought it right to be thus particular respecting a man who possessed no ordinary merit as a scholar, who was a great sufferer for conscience' sake, and who ought to be known in a more advantageous character than as the controversial opponent of Richard Baxter.[q]

[o] Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 944. [p] Noncon. Mem. vol. iii. p. 113.

[q] In that singular book, Walter Pope's 'Life of Bishop Ward,' there are some curious anecdotes of Bagshaw. When Pope was proctor of the University of Oxford, "The godly party," as he calls them, "resolved to abolish the statute, enjoining the wearing of caps and hoods, crying out against them as relics of Popery, and rags of the scarlet whore. To effect this their design, they sent an envoy to me, to engage me to comply with them, well knowing, that without my concurrence, their design would prove abortive. The person whom they employed, was a school-fellow and intimate friend of mine, who, although the son of a royalist, upon some disappointment, especially a great one that happened to him at Westminster, by the means of Mr. Busby, of which perhaps more hereafter. I say, upon this and other misfortunes, he became a Presbyterian and Commonwealth's man; if this addition be not superfluous, he was a man of learning, and knew it, and very hot and zealous in his way. He, I say, came to my chamber, and told me his message. 'Well,' said I to him, 'what have you to say against caps and hoods?' He made a long discourse, which I heard with patience; and when I perceived he was silent, 'Ned,' said I to him, 'prithee go back to thy chamber, and put in writing all that thou hast said, and bring it to me.' 'And what will you do with it then?' said he, 'I will,' I replied, 'blot out the words, caps and hoods, and in their places insert gowns; will not your arguments be every whit as strong against them as against formalities?' 'I confess they will,' he answered, 'but we are not come thither yet.' I replied, 'I'd make it my endeavour to keep you where you are, and so we parted.'

Pope gives a humorous account of the quarrel between Busby and Bagshaw, which seems to have been as hot as that with Baxter. After the rupture, he says, "He turns with a vengeance, goes over to the Gentiles, and that he

From this unpleasant personal controversy with Bagshaw, we proceed to notice Baxter's next publication, 'The True and Only Way of Concord of all Christian Churches; the Desirableness of it, and the Detection of false, dividing Terms.' 1680. 8vo. To this volume is prefixed a prefatory letter to Dr. Morley, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Gunning, bishop of Ely, the only Episcopal survivors with whom he had maintained the chief debates at the Savoy conference. The object of this preface, and, indeed, of the work, which was called forth by his controversy with Dodwell, is to state and defend the moderate proposals for peace and union which were then made. The volume is divided into three parts. In the first, he assigns reasons for the desirableness and necessity of unity; in the second, he discusses the terms of concord; and, in the third, he treats of schism.

There are many very excellent things, in the form both of principle and advice, scattered over this treatise; but there is

might be revenged upon Mr. Busby, sacrifices to Moloch, worships and adores the worst of men, even the judges of King Charles the First. But Mr. Busby, who ploughed with the same heifers, had too much compliance, cunning, and money, to be hurt by him. Upon this, he returns to his student's place at Christ-church, makes me a visit, and rails so bitterly against Mr. Busby, that even I was forced to take his part. He remained at Oxford, propagating his commonwealth principles; and when he was censor, which office in other colleges is called the dean, whose business it is to moderate at disputations, and give the scholars questions, he gave some in politics, and ordered the respondents to maintain them against monarchy and episcopacy. There he continued till the king was restored; then some considerable friends of his, whom I knew, advised him to go into the country, and there to live peaceably and conformably for the space of one year, at the end of which, they assured him they would procure him some considerable preferment in the church. Accordingly, he went and tried, but not being able to hold out so long, in a short time he repaired to London, seven times more embittered against ecclesiastical and kingly government than when he went into the country. And now he sides tooth and nail with the fanatics, and makes a great figure amongst them, exceeding most, if not all of them, in natural and acquired parts. King Charles sent for him, designing to work some good upon him, and do him a kindness; but he found him so obstinate and refractory, that he was forced to leave him to his own imaginations. He afterwards married a blind woman, who fell in love with him for his preaching; after which, I met him in Covent Garden, and accosted him freely. After the usual compliments passed, 'Ned,' said I to him jocularly, 'I hear thou hast married a blind woman, dost thou intend to beg with her?' Upon this I perceived his countenance change, and he returned me this answer: 'What's that to you; may I not marry whom I please?' 'Nay,' said I, 'if you are pleased, I have no reason to be offended,' and so we parted, and I never saw him after; but I understood since, that he died a prisoner in a house near Newgate, whither he was committed for his violent opposition to the government."—*Life of Seth Ward*, pp. 38—40.

a vast deal of extraneous matter, which so clouds and oppresses the argument, that much of its strength is destroyed. He defines schism to be "an unlawful separation from one or many churches; or making parties and divisions in them." He represents it as "usually caused by unskilful, proud, church tyrants and dogmatists; or by erroneous, proud, self-conceited persons." The necessary means of unity and church concord he represents as these: "That every catechised, understanding person, professing repentance, belief, and consent to the baptismal covenant, and the children of such dedicated by them to Christ, be baptized. And the baptized, accounted Christians, have right to Christian communion till their profession be validly disproved by an inconsistent profession or conversation; that is, by some doctrine against the essence of Christianity, or some scandalous, wilful sin, with impenitence, after sufficient admonition. That no man be excommunicated that is not proved thus far to excommunicate himself: and that the catechised or examined person be put upon no other profession of belief, consent, and practice, as interpreting the sacramental covenant, but of the articles of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue understood; and the general belief of, consent to, and practice of, all that he discerneth to be the Word of God."[r] He recommends that "the magistrate have the only public judgment whom he shall countenance and maintain, or tolerate, and whom he shall punish, or not tolerate or maintain; and that he never be the executioner of the clergy's sentence, without or against his own conscience and judgment."[s] In connexion with this, he recommends "the Christian magistrate to make three sorts of laws; one for the approved and maintained churches and pastors; another for the tolerated; and a third for the intolerable."[t] On the subject of subscription, his recommendation is as follows: "That the approved and maintained ministers be put to subscribe their belief of, consent to, and resolved practice or obedience of, all the sacred canonical Scriptures, so far as by diligent study they are able to understand them; and, more particularly, of the Christian religion summarily contained in the sacramental covenant, and in the ancient creeds received by the universal church, the Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue, as it is the law of Christ, and expounded by him in the Holy Scriptures; and that they will be faithful to the king and kingdom, and, as ministers, will faith-

[r] Baxter's 'Concord,' pp. 139, 140. [s] Part iii. p. 140. [t] Ibid.

fully guide the flocks in holy doctrine, worship, discipline, and example of life, labouring to promote truth, holiness, love, peace, and justice, for the salvation of men's souls, the edification of the church, and the glorifying and pleasing of God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And that the said maintained ministers be tried by the regulating laws which determine only such circumstance as *in genere* are necessary to be agreed on for uniformity and common harmony: as of time, place, parish bounds, what translation of Scripture to use, what version of Psalms, what decent habit, &c., not put to profess approbation of all these; but required to use them, and censured if they do not." [u]

Such is the substance of Baxter's views on the principal points. Considering what his sentiments were respecting church and state, they must be regarded as, on the whole, enlightened and liberal. His ideas of subscription and conformity were by no means rigid; and had only such a degree of liberty been allowed by the church of England, a substantial uniformity would have been secured, and the best part of her clergy prevented from separating from her communion. Such a degree of laxity some would consider very dangerous to the church; but they should remember that the uniformity required and enforced has only produced outward or nominal agreement, leaving the parties still widely different from each other, and in regard to the principles subscribed, as wide as the utmost latitude of freedom could have produced.

The next work of Baxter's is connected with a long controversy on the subject of this chapter, in which Dr. Owen and some of his brethren were implicated. It appeared in several separate pamphlets, published under various titles, and at last with the following general title: 'Catholic Communion defended against both extremes; and unnecessary Division confuted by Reasons against both the active and passive ways of Separation.' 4to. 1684. This work is divided into five parts, consisting of 'The dangerous Schismatic clearly detected and fully confuted;' in which Dr. Owen and Independency are the chief objects of animadversion. The second part is 'Against schism, and a book reported to be Mr. Raphson's,' in which the lawfulness of holding communion with the parish churches, is advocated by Baxter. The third is a 'Survey of the unreasonable defence of Dr. Stil-

[u] Baxter's 'Concord,' pp. 141, 142.

lingfleet for separation, pretending to oppose it;' in which Baxter defends himself and Mr. Humphreys against the charge of inconsistency, preferred by Dr. Sherlock and his party. They maintained that according to Baxter's principles, "if it be lawful to hear and communicate with the church once, it is lawful to do it constantly; and that if it be lawful to communicate with the church of England, it is unlawful to communicate with the Nonconformists." The fourth and fifth parts include his 'Catholic Communion defended and doubly defended,' as they had before been published, or 'Reasons of the Author's censured Communion with the Parish Churches; and Reasons why Dr. John Owen's Twelve Arguments change not Richard Baxter's judgment.' Another part of the same discussion he also published in 1684: 'Catholic Communion once more defended; or whether Parish Churches be true Christian Churches."

His own account of this controversy is as follows: "Seeing so many in prison for this error, to the dishonour of God, and so many more likely to be ruined by it, and the separating party, by the temptation of suffering, had so far prevailed with the most strict and zealous Christians, that a great number were of their mind; and the nonconformable ministers, whose judgment was against this separation, durst not publish their dislike of it, partly because of sharp and bitter censures of the Separatists, and partly for fear of losing all opportunity of teaching them; and some that had no hope of any other friends or maintenance, or auditors, thought they might be silent. On all these accounts, I that had no gathered church, nor lived on the contribution of any such, and was going out of the world in pain and languor, did think that I was fittest to bear men's censures, and to take that reproach on myself, which my brethren were less fit to bear, who might live for further service. So at the importunity of the bookseller, I consented to publish the reasons of my communicating in the parish churches, and against separation. Which, when it was coming out, a manuscript of Dr. Owen's,[x] who was lately dead, containing twelve arguments against such joining with the liturgy and public churches, was sent me, as that which had satisfied multitudes: I thought, that if this were unanswered, my labour would be much lost, because that party

[x] The title of Owen's tract, here referred to, is 'An Answer to Two Questions, with Twelve Arguments against any Conformity to Worship, not of Divine Institution.' It appears to have been written by Owen for the use of some friend, and by him to have been printed.

would still say, Dr. Owen's twelve arguments confuted all: whereupon, I hastily answered them, but found after, that it had been more prudent to have omitted his name. For, on that account, a swarm of revilers in the city poured out their keenest censures, and three or four wrote against me, whom I answered. I will not name the men that are known, and two of them are yet unknown; but they went on several principles, some charged all communion with the liturgy, with idolatry, anti-Christianity, perjury, and backsliding. One concealed his judgment, and quarrelled at my words. Another turned my treatise of Episcopacy against me, and said it fully proved the duty of separation. I was glad that I was hereby called to explain that treatise, lest it should do hurt to mistakers when I am dead; and that as in it I had said much against one extreme, I might leave my testimony against the other. I called all these writings together, 'A Defence of Catholic Communion.' And that I might be impartial, I adjoined two pieces against Dr. Sherlock, who ran quite into the contrary extremes, unchurching all Christians as schismatics. I confess I wrote so sharply against him, as must needs be liable to blame, with those that know not the man, and his former and latter virulent and ignorant writings." [y]

This is the most entangled of all the controversies in which Baxter engaged; as the titles of the same pamphlets vary in a way that makes it difficult to represent them correctly. To follow out the discussion, or to give a succinct account of it, would be useless and impracticable. The fact is simply this: Baxter was completely entangled between the church and the Independents, and the consistency of his principles and conduct was attacked by both parties. This he had himself provoked by various of his publications. He had, therefore, to defend his defences of the church, and his own separation from it; and to vindicate his defences of nonconformity, with the fact of his personal and stated conformity. His arguments often proved too much, if they proved any thing, and hence he became involved in difficulties from which, with all his acuteness and subtlety, it was impossible to extricate himself. It was thus, to adopt his own expressive language, "he made a wedge of his bare hand, by putting it into the cleft, and both sides closing upon it to his pain." "I have turned both parties," he says, "which I endeavoured to part in the fray, against myself. When each side had but one adversary, I had two." [z]

[y] Life, part iii. pp. 198, 199. [z] Cure of Church Div. p. 111.

While this unprofitable controversy went on, Dr. Owen, who had some share in it, or rather had been dragged into it, took his departure for a better world, where all is love and unity. In an appendix to his 'Reasons why Owen's Twelve Arguments' do not satisfy him, Baxter speaks of his character and talents in the most honourable terms, and supposes that if Owen had been permitted to address the disputers from his heavenly rest, it would be to this purpose:—

"Though all believers must be holy, and avoid all known wilful sin, they must not avoid one another, or their communion in good, because of adherent faults and imperfections; for Christ, who is most holy, receiveth persons and worship that are faulty, else none of us should be received. There is greatest goodness where there is greatest love and unity of spirit, maintained in the bond of peace. O call not to God to deny you mercy, by being unmerciful; nor to cast you all out by casting off one another. O separate not from all Christ's church on earth, lest you separate from him, or displease him. God hath bid you pray, but not told you whether it shall be oft in the same words, or in other; with a book or without a book. Make not superstitiously a religion by pretending that God hath determined such circumstances. O do not preach and write down love and communion of saints, on pretence that your little modes and ways only are good, and theirs idolatrous or intolerable; and do not slander and excommunicate all, or almost all, Christ's body, and then wrong God by fathering this upon him. You pray, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven;' why, here is no strife, division, disunion, animosity, sects, or factions, nor separating from, or excommunicating, one another. Learn of Christ, and separate from none further than they separate from him, and receive all that he receiveth. While you blame canonical dividers and unjust excommunicators, do not you renounce communion with tenfold more than they. I was, in this, of too narrow, mistaken principles; and, in the time of temptation I did not foresee to what church confusion and desolation, hatred and ruin, the dividing practices of some did tend; but the glorious unity, in heavenly perfection of love to God and one another, bids me beseech you to avoid all that is against it, and to make use of no mistakes of mine to cherish any such offences, or to oppose the motions of love, unity, and peace."

Owen's 'Twelve Arguments,' which Baxter took up so warmly, even after his death, do not appear to have been intended for the press by him. They were handed about in manuscript, and printed by some one when Owen was no longer capable of explaining or defending himself. The defence of the doctor was taken up very warmly by some of his friends. One writer, in the character of a vindicator, brought out two pamphlets: the former entitled 'A Vindication of the late Dr. Owen,' to which Baxter replies in his 'Catholic Communion Doubly Defended.' To this the writer rejoined in his 'Vindiciæ Revindicatæ; being an answer to Mr. Baxter's Book; and Mr. Baxter's notions of the Saint's Repentance and Displeasure in Heaven considered.' 1684. 4to. The titles of several other of the pamphlets written in defence of Owen, I have given in the note below.[a]

About this same time, and evidently to aid him in the same cause, Baxter published, 'The Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale: of the Nature of true Religion, the Causes of its Corruption, and the Church's Calamity, by Men's Additions and Violence, with the Desired Cure.' 1684. 4to. The manuscript of the three discourses contained in this publication, had been given by Judge Hale to Baxter, who, after entertaining some doubts as to the propriety of publishing them, was at last, by the advice of his friends, induced to bring them out. They are not long, and hence do not enter very deeply into the important subjects of which they treat; but they afford a fine illustration of the wisdom and moderation of their author, and show that, were all religious men like Sir Matthew Hale, there would be no oppres-

[a] 'A Theological Dialogue, containing the Defence and Justification of Dr. J. Owen from Forty-two Errors, charged upon him by Mr. Richard Baxter, in a certain MS. about Communion in Liturgical Worship.' 1684. 4to.—'The Second Part of the Theological Dialogue; being a Reply to Mr. Richard Baxter.' 1684. 4to. Both the above are ascribed to John Faldo.—'Bellarminus Junior Enervatus; or, the Insufficiency of Mr. Richard Baxter's Answer to Dr. Owen's Twelve Arguments about Divine Worship detected,' &c. 1684. 4to. This is inscribed to Mr. Stephen Lobb.—'The Winding-Sheet for Mr. Baxter's Dead, &c.; with Twelve Queries concerning Separation, wherein the Reverend and Learned Dr. Owen is further Vindicated.' This is ascribed to Mr. Morgan Lloyd, of Wrexham.—'Vindication of Dr. Owen, by a Friendly Scrutiny into the manner of Mr. Baxter's Opposition to Twelve Arguments concerning Worship by the Liturgy.' 1684. 4to. 'Insufficiency of Mr. Baxter's Answer to Dr. Owen's Twelve Arguments,' &c. 1684. 4to.

sion on the one part, or unnecessary quarrels on the other; so that peace and love would prevail.

Baxter's 'sense of the subscribed articles of the church of England,' has already, in the last chapter of the first part of this work, been fully brought before the reader. I have also adverted to the union or agreement formed between the Presbyterians and Independents in 1691; and to the satisfaction which it appears to have afforded Baxter. Though then in the last stage of his mortal career, he published, with reference to it, 'Church Concord: containing a dissuasive from unnecessary divisions and separations; the real concord of the moderate Independents with the Presbyterians instanced in ten seeming differences; with the terms necessary for concord among all true churches and Christians.' 1691. 4to.

Among the last of Baxter's writings, there yet remains another treatise which belongs to the subject of this chapter. 'Of National Churches; their description, institution, use, preservation, danger, maladies, and cure.' 1691. 4to. In this pamphlet he endeavours to prove that national churches are of Christ's institution; but when he comes to explain himself, the national church which he approves, is such as the world has never yet seen, nor is likely soon to see, unless more extraordinary changes take place than have yet occurred in the history of our planet. What will be the duty of Christians, when kings and rulers, with their subjects, shall in general be influenced by Christian principles, and under the direction of scriptural laws, it will be time enough to discuss when these things shall take place.

Baxter continued to look forward to some such mighty and glorious change; which induces me to place here, though not in the order in which the book occurred, his 'Moral Prognostication: First, What shall befall the Churches on Earth, till their Concord, by the Restitution of their Primitive Purity, Simplicity, and Charity. Secondly, How that Restitution is likely to be made, if ever, and what shall befall them thenceforth unto the end, in that golden age of love.'[b]

This tract was written in 1661, but not published till 1680. Had it been produced immediately before his death, it might have been regarded as insinuating something of a claim to pro-

[b] Works, vol. xv.

phetic foresight. Baxter, however, professed to be no prophet; but reasoning on certain principles, he considered himself justified in anticipating specific results. He professes great confidence, that God would in due time raise up some wise and spiritual king, who should discern the best method of promoting peace and union among all parties, and who should be eminently instrumental in advancing the interests of religion among men. It is not for us to say what will be; but judging from the past course of the divine proceedings, and the genius of Christianity, it is not likely that the kings of the earth are ever destined to be the great means of promoting and establishing the spiritual glory of the kingdom of Christ.

Having concluded the historical account of the numerous writings of our author, on the subject of catholic communion, it may now be necessary to state in a few words, what his sentiments on church government and communion, divested of all controversy, really were. As nearly as I can ascertain, I should judge they were as follows:

He held the necessity of maintaining social and church fellowship with all, who, in the judgment of charity, ought to be regarded as real Christians; but disapproved of holding communion with those who ought not to be so considered. He approved of a civil establishment of Christianity, and of the maintenance of the ministers by national funds; but it was only such an establishment as should leave the ministers unfettered and unembarrassed in their work; and which should neither too severely enforce the payment of tithes, nor much restrain any who dissented from it. He was opposed to tests and covenants of human framing, unless of the most general nature. He did not object to a moderate kind of episcopacy, which amounted, in fact, rather to a voluntary submission of the ministers of a district, to a constant but limited presidency, on the part of some one individual, on account of his age or some superior qualifications. While he contended for ministerial authority, he recognised the rights of a Christian congregation to choose its own pastor, and also to a certain share in the discipline of the church. He did not object to a liturgy, but to many parts of that used in the church. He also objected to the enforcement of it on any, and to strict adherence to it on all occasions. In short, he considered a Christian church to be an association of spiritual persons for their own good and the

good of others; which ought to be aided and countenanced by the civil magistracy professing Christianity; but which should not be deprived of its own inherent and independent right to manage its own affairs, and to adapt its proceedings to its peculiar case and circumstances. Various other things were either contended for or objected to by him; but these positions may be considered as embracing the substance of the sentiments he advocated in his numerous writings for peace and love.

It is not my business to point out the defects or inconsistencies of his system or his practice, but to call the attention of the reader to what it really was. He lived during a period when much warmth and keenness were manifested on all the points which we have brought under review. He had to feel, or rather to fight his way on every point. There were few to assist him in the peculiar course he had marked out for himself, and, therefore, all due allowance must be made for the mistakes into which he fell.

With all his faults and imperfections, he was a man of a truly catholic spirit, who laboured hard to heal the wounds that had been inflicted on the church by various means, and for which there seemed to be no cure. He acted as a pioneer, preparing the way for clearer statements than his own, and for a more correct system than has yet been generally adopted. His catholic principle of fellowship with all genuine Christians, is better understood than it was; though even yet, alas! but partially adopted as a principle, and still more imperfectly exemplified in practice. It implies not indifference to truth, but devoted attachment to it. It involves union without compromise, and co-operation without sacrifice of consistency. It recognises the exclusive claims of divine authority in religion, and the unquestionable rights of conscience; securing for each individual the power of acting according to his own convictions, while it requires him to concede no less to others. It will ultimately effect what acts of uniformity have hitherto failed to produce, and which will never be brought about either by compulsory measures of state, or stormy controversies in the church. A greater portion of the spirit of Christ, and a brighter manifestation of his holy image, will do more to unite all his disciples, than the most perfect theory of church government that has yet been recommended, or forced on the world. When this blessed period of love and union shall arrive, the services of Baxter as the indefatigable advocate of catholic communion will not be forgotten.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKS ON NONCONFORMITY.

Introductory Observations on the History of Nonconformity—'The Nonconformist Papers'—Never answered—'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Ministry'—'The Judgment of Nonconformists of the Office of Reason in Matters of Religion'—'Of the Difference between Grace and Morality'—'About Things Indifferent'—'About things Sinful'—'What Mere Nonconformity is not'—'Nonconformist's Plea for Peace'—Second Part of Ditto—Defence of Ditto—Correspondence with Tillotson—'Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet'—'Second Defence of the Mere Nonconformist'—'Search for the English Schismatic'—'Treatise of Episcopacy'—'Third Defence of the Cause of Peace'—'Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry'—'English Nonconformity'—Conclusion.

The distinction which I have made between the works of Baxter on Catholic Communion and Church Government, and those on the Nonconformist controversy, may appear to some merely a refinement, and that the publications thus distinguished, belong all to one class. Attention to the nature of many of these works, however, will show that this is not correct. The subjects, it is true, do frequently shade into each other; but they are substantially distinct. Many of the publications on church government might have been written, though the question of nonconformity had never been agitated; while that question, on the other hand, involved many points, which are altogether independent of particular views of church polity. The distinction will, at all events, be convenient, as it enables us to separate the voluminous writings of our author on subjects very closely connected, but which, if treated under one head, would have been tiresome both to the writer and to the reader.

Nonconformity is a relative term. It supposes some previously existing system of observances, established either by political authority, or general consent; and denotes a practical secession on grounds conceived by the parties to require and

justify it. Like the term Protestantism, it is general and comprehensive. It applies to various grounds of secession from the national religion, and includes different systems of ecclesiastical polity. No wise man would choose to differ from those around him, in reference to matters either civil or religious, unless in his own estimation he had good reasons for that difference; and in such cases it is the obvious dictate of duty to investigate the questions at issue, with calmness and deliberation; that conviction and not caprice, principle and not passion, may regulate the inquiry, and form the decision.[c]

The Nonconformist controversy is a very unattractive subject to many persons. They regard it as a debate about words, and names, and questions, which gender strife, rather than godly edifying. Assuming either that there is no authority or standard in such matters, or that the authority of certain ecclesiastical superiors ought to be submitted to without murmuring or disputing, they pronounce their disapprobation on all discussions of such subjects, and on the parties who engage in them. High churchmen are offended that the doctrine of conformity should be called in question at all. Those who profess high spirituality, look on the subject as unworthy of their regard, and as only fit for such as mind the carnal things of the kingdom of God. Dissenters, as well as others, frequently talk of it as being among nonessential matters, and scarcely deserving of profound consideration, and while they luxuriate in the privileges which their forefathers purchased for them at so dear a rate, almost pity and condemn the measures which procured them.

Without professing that the highest consideration attaches to the Nonconformist controversy, or approving of all the views or conduct of the early Nonconformists, I can by no means regard the subject as one of small importance. In a life of Baxter, it is necessarily a prominent subject, and no apology can be requisite for treating it fully in an account of one who was the most moderate of all the Nonconformists, while he wrote in defence of his brethren and their cause, more than they all. But, independently of its connexion with Baxter, the subject has strong claims to dispassionate and careful examination.

It is impossible for any one to form a correct view of English history for nearly three hundred years, without an acquaintance with this controversy, and with the characters and principles of

[c] See a very able Sermon on Nonconformity, by the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, A. M.

the men who engaged in it. It is almost co-eval with the English Reformation; and the great questions then started cannot be considered as yet finally determined. The Puritans under the Tudors, became Nonconformists under the Stuarts, and Dissenters under the family of Hanover. They have been men of the same principles substantially throughout. In maintaining the rights of conscience, they have contributed more than any other class of persons to set limits to the power of the crown, to define the rights of subjects, and to secure the liberties of Britain. They have wrested a rod of iron from the hand of despotism, and substituted in its place a sceptre of righteousness and mercy. They have converted the divine right of kings into the principles of a constitutional government, in which the privileges of the subject are secured by the same charter which guards the throne. The history of the principles of such a body ought not, therefore, to be regarded as unimportant by any friends of British freedom.

The Nonconformist controversy contributed greatly to ascertain the distinct provinces of divine and human legislation; to establish the paramount and exclusive authority of God, and of the revelation of his will, over the conscience of man; and to define the undoubted claims of civil government to the obedience of its subjects in all matters purely civil. It is not alleged that all, or even the majority of the Nonconformists, clearly understood the doctrine of religious liberty. But they, and the Puritans who preceded them, were men of conscience themselves, who could not submit to human dictation when it interfered with what they believed God required; so that, though they did not perceive the full bearings of their own principles, and sometimes acted and wrote inconsistently with them, they remonstrated, resisted, and suffered, when kings and bishops commanded them to fall down and worship the idols which they had set up. From this contest and struggle truth derived great advantage. The untenable and unrighteous exactions of authority were exposed, the supreme authority of the Scriptures maintained, and the rights of conscience at last established. The mist and darkness which had so long covered one of the first and greatest principles of legislation, were gradually cleared away, and in due time that principle stood forth before the world, as no longer to be disputed—that man is accountable to God only, for all that he believes as truth, for all that he offers as worship, and for all

that he practises as religion. This is the doctrine of the Bible, the dictate of enlightened reason; and lies at the foundation of all correct and acceptable obedience to God.

To the same controversy we are indebted for the origin of the correct and scriptural sentiments which are now extensively entertained respecting the unsecular nature of the kingdom of Christ. The intermixture of heavenly and earthly things does indeed still prevail, and its pernicious tendency is yet imperfectly estimated by many; but considerable progress has been made towards the full discovery of the entire spirituality of Messiah's kingdom. Its independence of secular support and defence, its resources both of propagation and maintenance, its uncongeniality with the principles, spirit, and practices of earth-born men, are now much more generally admitted than they once were. In fact, the ablest defenders of ecclesiastico-civil establishments, have now entirely abandoned the doctrine of divine right, and boldly avow that they are no part of Christianity, but only a human expedient for its propagation. Many of the Nonconformists, and Baxter in particular, were sticklers for an establishment. They did not clearly understand what was involved in their own principles; but in maintaining a warfare against the introduction of ungodly men into the ministry, and the neglect of ecclesiastical discipline; and in contending for the rights of the church, independently of the will of the civil magistrate, they prepared the way for better and clearer views than those which they themselves maintained.

With this controversy too, there was often incorporated the defence or the assertion of some of the most important doctrines of the Gospel. These the adversaries of the Nonconformists in general very imperfectly understood. Indeed, enmity to salvation by grace, to justification by faith, election, perseverance, with their collateral truths, was often at the root of the opposition and persecution which had to be endured. There were doctrinal Puritans and Nonconformists, who would not have scrupled at most of the forms of the church, but who regarded its leaders as among the most deadly enemies to those great essential truths which intimately belong to the salvation of men.

There have been High Church and Low Church, which are only different expressions for Puritan and Anti-Puritan, Conformist and Nonconformist, ever since the Reformation. In the reign of Edward, Cranmer and Ridley headed the one class,

Rogers and Hooper the other. Though all four died at the stake for the common faith, the two last had suffered severely from the two former, on account of their opposition to certain imposed rites and ceremonies. In the days of Mary, both parties fled into foreign countries for security. But, even when in exile, the former stiffly adhered to the ceremonies which they had endeavoured to impose when at home, while the latter, availing themselves of the privilege of strangers, as resolutely refused to submit to them. This created no small dissension between the parties while abroad. On their return, after the advancement of Elizabeth to the throne, each hoped to carry their point. Those who were zealous for rites and usages, however, gained the queen's favour; their views being more in unison with her arbitrary disposition, and her love of pomp, in religious as well as in civil matters. But although the other party were disappointed, they were not entirely thrown out. As there was a great deficiency of properly qualified persons to occupy the pulpits and principal places in the establishment, many of those who were known to be opposed to some of its ritual, were allowed to officiate in the churches, and their noncompliance, with parts of the rubric, was connived at. Some of them were also raised to dignified offices. In the course of her reign, however, the bonds were gradually drawn tighter and tighter, and very severe sufferings came to be inflicted on a body of excellent and conscientious men.

What is said of the Israelites in Egypt, may be said with justice of the Puritans,—the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew. The severities they experienced only increased their resolution to submit to no human impositions in religion, to resist encroachments on conscience, and added to their influence among those who respected men suffering for conscience' sake. Nothing but the energy and vigilance of Elizabeth's government prevented very serious disturbances in the country from these causes. Parliament would more than once have given relief, but was prevented from doing so, by the archbishop, and his influence over the queen. In her last days, when the nation was beginning to worship the rising sun, some abatement took place; but still the conflict went on.

A vigorous attempt was made by the Puritans, at the beginning of James's reign, to accomplish a further reformation of the church, and to secure liberty for those who conscientiously scrupled to observe some of its rites, though they wished still to

remain within its pale. James's hatred of Presbyterianism, which he transported across the Tweed, defeated this project. The canons formed by the convocation, under his direction, increased instead of mitigating the evils under which the Puritans groaned; and during the whole of his reign, and that of his unfortunate son and successor, matters gradually grew worse and worse, till they finally came to a grand crisis.

The pontificate of Laud was a great means of accelerating that conflict, in which he lost his head. The *conforming* Puritans were in his time severely dealt with. If they did not bow to the altar, would not read the book of sports, or were guilty of the crime of holding lectures, or of preaching twice on the Lord's-day, it was enough to bring them before the high-commission court, and subject them to all its oppressive and iniquitous censures. The consequences were, that multitudes of the ablest ministers, and of the best of the people, left their native country, and fled for an asylum to the wilds and deserts of America. At last, oppression brought the country to desperation, and in the struggle which ensued, both the church and the monarchy were wrecked.

There was religious peace, but not general satisfaction, during the Protectorate. The friends of the fallen church were still numerous; the lovers of form and ceremony in religion were not few, though they were silent and sullen. The opponents of the hierarchy were divided among themselves; the largest fragment, the Presbyterian, opposed themselves to all the sectaries, were enamoured with an established church, and not as a body inimical to a certain species of episcopal government.

When Charles II. was restored, the episcopal establishment, as a matter of course, was reinstated in all its rights and privileges; and the body of the ministers who were attached to a simpler, and what they regarded a more scriptural form of religion, were driven away. The vast majority of these persons did not decidedly object to a modified episcopacy—to a liturgical form of worship, and to the use of various rites, provided they were not absolutely imposed on their consciences as matters of faith and scriptural practice. They were mostly believers in the lawfulness of a civil establishment of Christianity, and consequently were not dissenters from the church; they only objected to certain things belonging to, or imposed by it.

These observations, with the history of the events of Baxter's life, in the former part of this work, will enable the reader to

understand the nature of his writings on the subject of Nonconformity. Their great objects were, to state the evils of which he and his friends complained, as belonging to the episcopal system established in this country; to assign the grounds of their conscientious objections to that system; to explain what alterations would satisfy them, and the reasonableness of demanding those alterations; and to defend himself and brethren from many charges falsely or ignorantly preferred against them. It would be an almost endless, and certainly a useless task, to analyse all these works, or minutely to enter into their diversified contents; but I shall endeavour to convey to the reader some idea of their nature, and of the controversies which they involved, or of which they formed a part.

The first of these works, which deserves our attention, though not entirely Baxter's production, nor bearing his name, is the collection of papers which passed between the commissioners at the Savoy, in 1661. Of that debate, a full account has been given in the former part of this work. We have now to do only with the publication, and with the part which Baxter had in it.

It appeared in 1661, with the following title: 'An account of all the proceedings of the commissioners of both persuasions, appointed by his sacred majesty, according to letters patent for the review of the Book of Common Prayer,' &c. 4to.

On the first appearance of this volume, which had no name attached to it, it was at once imputed to Baxter, though he was then a hundred miles off, and knew nothing at all about it. It contained only some of the documents, and these very inaccurately printed. The rest followed afterwards. Baxter supposed they were published by a poor man, whom he paid for writing a copy of the papers. The complete collection consists of the following documents: 1. Two papers of proposals concerning the discipline and ceremonies of the church of England, presented to King Charles II. by the Presbyterian ministers. 2. Their petition for peace to the bishops. 3. Their reformation of the liturgy. 4. An account of the proceedings of the commissioners on both sides for reviewing the Book of Common Prayer; with the king's commission prefixed. 5. The exceptions of the Presbyterians against the liturgy. 6. The papers which passed between the commissioners, in which the matter is argued *pro* and *con.* 7. A true copy of the disputation at

the Savoy, as managed by the episcopal divines, to prove that there is nothing sinful in the liturgy. 8. An account of the debate and petition to the king, by the Presbyterian ministers who were appointed commissioners. 9. Archbishop Usher's reduction of episcopacy to the form of synodical government, and another paper.[d] Of these documents, Baxter was the exclusive author of Nos. 2 and 3, besides having a principal hand in most of the others. In his own Life, the greater number of these documents are published, with a very full account of all that took place at the conference. Those who would be masters of the Nonconformist controversy, must study these papers, especially keeping in eye Usher's model, to which the moderate Presbyterians constantly referred as that which would satisfy them.

"Their publication," says Baxter, "had various effects; it increased the burning indignation which before was kindled against me on one side, and it somewhat mitigated the censures that were taken up against me on the other side. For the chief of the Congregational or Independent party, took it ill that we took not them with us in our treaty, and so did a few of the Presbyterian divines, all whom we so far passed by as not to invite them to our councils; partly because we knew that it would be but a hinderance to us; partly because their persons were unacceptable; and partly, because it might have delayed the work. Most of the Independents, and some few Presbyterians, raised it as a common censure against us, that if we had not been so forward to meet the bishops with the offers of so much at first, and to enter into a treaty with them without just cause, we had all had better terms, and that standing off would have done more good: so that though my *person* and *intentions* had a more favourable censure from them than some others, yet for the action, I was commonly censured by them, as one that had granted them too much, and wronged my brethren by entering into this treaty, out of too earnest a desire of concord with them. Thus were men on both extremes offended with me; and I found what enmity, charity, and peace, are likely to meet with in the world. But when these papers were printed, the Independents confessed that we had dealt faithfully and satisfactorily: and indifferent men said that reason had over-

[d] These documents were all printed together in an 8vo volume, in 1701. The title is—'The History of Nonconformity, as it was argued and stated by Commissioners on both sides, in 1661.'

whelmed the cause of the diocesans, and that we had offered them so much as left them utterly without excuse. The moderate episcopal men said the same; but the engaged Prelatists were vehemently displeased, that these papers should thus come abroad." [e]

The Episcopalians threatened, on the appearance of the papers, to answer them; but no regular or formal answer ever appeared. Roger L'Estrange often sneered at them. An anonymous writer, supposed to be Bishop Womack, referred to one of the papers; and Sir Henry Yelverton, in another anonymous pamphlet, written in defence of Bishop Morley, alluded to them. These, however, deserve not to be regarded as answers. If the church had been in a state of suffering after the Savoy conference, replies would have been produced in abundance; but as she was in full possession of power, it was thought the wisest course to reply to the Nonconformists in acts of parliament, rather than in pamphlets.

The times did not admit of Baxter publishing any thing after the Savoy conference, on the subject of Nonconformity, till 1672, when he brought out a small 12mo volume, entitled 'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Holy Ministry Rebuked, and Tolerated Preaching of the Gospel Vindicated.' This work appeared anonymously, and was intended as an answer to a book entitled 'Toleration not to be Abused,' which also was without a name, but is ascribed by Baxter to Dr. Fullwood; who appears to have grudged the temporary liberty which his brethren then enjoyed, or to have been greatly afraid of the abuse of liberty. Baxter argues very justly, that as the Nonconformists had been ordained to the ministry, if they could not obtain a legal right or establishment, it was their duty to preach when they were merely tolerated, and that desertion of the work would be both pusillanimous and sinful. "Dr. Fullwood," he tells us, "wrote a jocular, deriding answer to this treatise; and also printed an assize sermon against separating from the parish ministers. Divers called on me to reply to the first; but I told them I had better work to do than to answer every script against me; and while I demurred, Dr. Fullwood sent me an extraordinary kind

[e] Life, part ii. pp. 378, 380. The most complete collection of the papers is to be found in Baxter's own Life, as none had copies of several of them there published but himself. As documents, they afford important illustration of the principles and temper of both parties.

letter, offering to do his best to the Parliament for our union and restoration, which ended my thoughts of that; but I know not anything to the purpose done."[f]

At the end of this little work there is a chapter containing an humble petition to the Conformists, in which Baxter expostulates with them in the most affectionate and solemn manner; imploring them not to take offence, because their brethren who seceded from the church, could not entirely agree with them; disclaiming all hostility, and only entreating for himself and others, liberty to act according to their consciences, in doing what they regarded as the will of God.

An answer was published to this book, somewhat corresponding to the character given of Fullwood's performance, entitled 'Speculum Baxterianum, or Baxter against Baxter; being Reflections on a Treatise,' &c.; but as it did not appear till 1680, I suppose it is not the pamphlet to which Baxter here refers. It consists chiefly of quotations from the numerous publications of Baxter, in which he appears, or is made, to contradict himself. Nothing could be easier than this. "Who the author of the 'Speculum' is," says Baxter, "I know not, the subject calleth me to no particular answer. He mistook the question, as if it had been what the world should think of me. In which I leave them to their liberty without much contradiction."[g]

In 1676, he printed a pamphlet on the 'Judgment of Nonconformists, concerning the part or office of reason in religion,' which, he says, had good acceptance, having been published with the consent of many ministers. Encouraged by this, in the same year, he printed together four treatises, 'The Judgment of the Nonconformists about the difference between grace and morality;' 'Their Judgment of things indifferent commanded by authority;' 'Their Judgment of things sinful by accident;' and 'What Mere Nonconformity is not.' Some of these treatises were written in 1668, and some of them shortly after; but his prudent friends persuaded him to lay them aside as unsuitable to the state and temper of the times. The first of them is intended to obviate some objections raised against the Nonconformists, as if they differed from others, not merely on the subject of Conformity, but on that of religion generally,

[f] Life, part iii. p. 102. [g] Preface to the 'Third Defence of Peace.'

and held some strange notions about grace and morality. The second relates to the question which was started at the Savoy conference, and which led to so much debating afterwards: 'Whether things antecedently lawful, do therefore become unlawful, because commanded by lawful authority.' This it was maintained the Nonconformists affirmed, but which Baxter denies. It is easy to perceive, that it is a very ensnaring question viewed abstractly, and that much must depend on the use which the parties would be disposed to make of the answer, whether in the affirmative or the negative. The third treatise, 'Of things sinful by accident,' arose out of the same conference; and is designed to show, that things in themselves lawful, may become sinful by the accidental circumstances to which they happen sometimes to be related. For example, there may be nothing sinful in the Book of Common Prayer; but if men are required to use it as an act of submission to *human* authority, and for improper reasons assigned by it; and if the use of it is understood to be an acknowledgment of that authority, or of the justice of the reasons which it assigns, it becomes then absolutely unlawful to every man, who conscientiously objects to the authority enjoining it. Much of the Nonconformist controversy hangs on this question; which, would not seem to be of very difficult solution.

The last treatise on what 'Mere Nonconformity is not,' was designed to strip the question of many of those adjuncts which were regarded as more or less inseparable from it. It is not difficult to define mere Nonconformity; but very difficult to say who were the *mere* Nonconformists for whom Baxter wrote. Those who left the church of England, or who were driven from it, were influenced in their conduct by a vast variety of considerations. Baxter could not always satisfy others by the exposition of his own sentiments, still less would he be likely to satisfy them in his account of the sentiments of his brethren. Some objected that he went too far; others, that he did not go far enough; so that what *mere* Nonconformity is, must be ascertained by other means than this pamphlet.

When these treatises were printed, some of his political friends in parliament and elsewhere, were against their publication; conceiving they would increase, rather than mitigate the sufferings of the Nonconformists, by exasperating the church. and offending the other sects; he therefore suppressed them,

after they had cost him twenty-three pounds.[h] They afterwards appeared along with the second part of his 'Nonconformists' Plea for Peace.'

In 1679, he published 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace; or, an Account of their Judgment, in certain things in which they are misunderstood.' 8vo. The act restraining the press being expired, he says, "I published a book that lay by me, to open the case of Nonconformity, which greatly offended many Conformists; though I ventured no further, but to name the things that we durst not conform to. Even the same men that had long called out to us, to tell them what we desired; and who said we had nothing to say, could not bear it. The bishop of Ely, Dr. Gunning, told me, he would petition authority to command us to give the reasons of our nonconformity, and not thus keep up schism, and give no reason for it. The bishop of London, Dr. Compton, told me, that the king took us to be not sincere for not giving the reasons of our dissent. I told them both, it was a strange expectation from men that had so fully given their reasons against the old conformity in their reply, and could get no answer; and when their own laws would excommunicate, imprison, and ruin us for doing any such thing as they demanded. But I would beg it on my knees, and return them most hearty thanks, if they would but procure us leave to do it. Yet when it was but half done, it greatly provoked them; and they wrote and said, that without the least provocation I had assaulted them; whereas, I only named what we stuck at, professing to accuse none of them; and they thought seventeen years' silencing, persecuting, imprisoning, accusations of parliament-men, prelates, priests, and people, and all their calls, (what would you have? why do you not tell us what you stick at?) to be no provocation. Yea, bishops and doctors had long told great men, that I myself had said it was only things inconvenient, and not things sinful, which I refused to conform to; whereas, I had given them in the description of eight particular things in the old conformity which I undertook to prove sinful. At the Savoy we began with one of them, and in the petition for peace, we offered our oaths, that we would refuse conformity to nothing but what we took to be sin. And now when I told them what the sins were, O! what a common storm did it raise among them; when heathens would have fit

[h] Life, part iii. p. 85.

men speak for themselves before they are condemned, it is criminal in us to do it seventeen years after."[i]

Before the publication of this volume, the Nonconformists had been assailed, reproached, and challenged, in a multitude of books. Baxter tells us that he had read the publications of "Bishop Morley, Messrs. Stileman, Fullwood, Durel, Fowlis, Falkener, Nanfen, Boreman, Parker, Tompkins, Ashton, Hollingworth, Good, Hinkley, L'Estrange, Long, the 'Friendly Debate,' the 'Counterminer,' and many more." In these performances they were accused of being adversaries of peace, lovers of contentions, guilty of schism, sedition, and all uncharitableness. The 'Plea for Peace' was intended to meet all these charges, and to lay the true grounds of Nonconformity before the world. It is therefore both a defensive and an offensive work. He argues strenuously against conformity on the ground of the matters imposed, particularly on the ministers; the assent, consent, approbation, and canonical subscription required from them. Re-ordination, the oath requiring them never to seek any alteration of church government, and many other things, furnish him with arguments in support of his Nonconformity, which no Conformist had ever satisfactorily met; and which most dissenters believe have never yet been answered. There is much historical matter mixed up with the argument of this book, tracing the progress of Nonconformity from the beginning, to the period at which it was written.

It seems from his own account, however, as if he had been obliged to write this book, in consequence of the conduct of mistaken friends, as much as the provocation of avowed enemies. "Two old friends," he says, "whom I had a hand in turning from anabaptistry and separation, Mr. Thomas Lamb and Mr. William Allen, who had followed John Goodwin, and became pastors of an Anabaptist church; though but tradesmen, fell on writing against separation, more strongly than any of the conformable clergy. In consequence of their old error, they now ran into the other extreme, especially Mr. Lamb. They wrote against our gathering assemblies, and preaching when we were silenced; against whose mistakes I wrote 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace.'"[k]

It is somewhat amusing to find Baxter employing himself with all his energy, to make Separatists churchmen, and churchmen separatists; and then finding that he could not manage them

[i] Life, part iii. p. 187. [k] Ibid. p. 190.

upon his own principles. Allen and Lamb, and his wife Barbara, appear to have been among the most troublesome and voluminous of his correspondents. Sylvester has swelled out his folio volume by printing some of the letters that passed between them. He might have added many more of the same description. It is wonderful Baxter, great as his patience was, should have been capable of reading and answering the letters with which they plagued him. It is probable that he at last wrote this book, if possible, to get rid of them.[1]

A reply to this work was published by a clergyman of the name of Cheney, under the affected and ridiculous title of 'The Conforming-Nonconformist, and the Nonconforming-Conformist.' Whether this was intended to describe one person or two, seems doubtful; but the ambiguity of the title is removed by the work, which is a weak attempt to show how men may subscribe and swear without believing any thing in the sense of the imposers; like the device of the Roman slave, "Jurari linguâ, mente jurari nihil." Cheney "was afraid some one would write against Baxter, and neither convince the Nonconformists, nor do justice to Conformity;" and therefore he wrote a book which did neither. Cheney and Baxter were acquainted. Baxter considered him an honest, weak man, who had attempted what was beyond his powers; but seemed intended only as a precursor of some mightier wight who was to follow.

The second part of 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace,' appeared in a 4to volume early in 1680. It contains, beside the four treatises formerly mentioned as printed in 1676, an account of the principles of the Nonconformists, in regard to civil and ecclesiastical authority and obedience; and a vindication of them from the charges of rebellion, killing the king, and creating anarchy in the nation, and schism in the church. It is rather a strange but tedious melange of politics and theology; the former not always very consistent with just views of British constitutional liberty. Though Baxter should have held what may be called the popular view of the constitution, to justify his own conduct, this was not altogether the case; and yet he expresess himself in this performance in a way that could not be acceptable to

[1] Life, App. No. iii. Baxter MSS. These persons, after having been Baptists, and members, for many years, of John Goodwin's church, afterwards became high Conformists. Allen appears to have been a man of talents; he wrote several pieces on doctrinal and practical theology, which were collected in a folio volume, published in 1707, with a preface by the Bishop of Chichester, and a sermon on the death of the author by Bishop Kidder.

the friends of arbitrary power. In this, as in some other things, he endeavoured to steer a middle course, in consequence of which, he gave offence to both parties, without succeeding in accomplishing his own object. In avoiding Scylla, he fell into Charybdis, the invariable fate of those who engage in party discussions, and vainly imagine that a selection of some things, which are held by both sides, and the rejection of others, is the golden medium of truth and peace.

To prevent Cheney's book from doing mischief, though it was not deserving of attention on account of its own merits, Baxter published 'The Defence of the Nonconformists' Plea for Peace.' 8vo. 1680. No employment can well be more dull and uninteresting than that of answering a man who is incapable, from want of sense, or want of honesty of stating correctly the matter in dispute. Cheney may have been very honest in his intentions; but he must have been prodigiously stupid, as a great part of Baxter's employment in answering him consists in correcting his mis-statements of matter of fact, or palpable misrepresentations of the whole question at issue between the Church and the Nonconformists.

An adversary of a higher order, both in talents and in the church, shortly afterwards appeared in the person of Dr. Stillingfleet, then dean of St. Paul's, and afterwards bishop of Worcester. He had formerly written an *Irenicum*, to reconcile the contending parties, by an attempt to show that no form of church government is to be found in the New Testament.[m] On the second of May, 1680, he preached a sermon before the lord mayor, which he afterwards published by request, with the title of the 'Mischief of Separation.' This discourse was like the firing of a signal gun at the commencement of a general engagement. Both parties had been preparing for battle for some time. The Church was becoming increasingly indignant that neither time nor persecution had destroyed the seceders from her pale; while the Nonconformists, worn out with long-continued suffering, and wearied with restraining, were glad of

[m] The 'Irenicum' was first published in 1659, when the church was in a state of depression and suffering, and her wounds required to be healed by the salve of concession and moderation. Stillingfleet afterwards repented of writing this book. "There are many things in it," he says, "which, if he were to write again, he would not say; some which show his youth, and want of due consideration; others, which he yielded too far, in hopes of gaining the dissenting parties to the church of England."

an opportunity to give vent to their feelings in the vindication of their cause.

Stillingfleet's sermon imputes most unjustly to the Nonconformists all the blame of separation from the church, and the mischiefs which had arisen from it. He makes no proper allowance for their conscientious objections to the exercise of an imposing power, and to the unscriptural nature of the things imposed; for the harshness and severity of the treatment which they had experienced; or for the exasperating effects of their unmerited sufferings. He was no longer "Rector of Sutton," but the "Dean of St. Paul's;" and had now laid aside his "weapon salve for the church's wounds," to employ another weapon to irritate and increase them. It is too generally forgotten on the side of the church, that the sin of separation may belong to those who are in, as much as to those who are out; by the former imposing a yoke which neither free men nor Christians ought to be called to wear; and, therefore, the mischiefs, how many, or how great soever they may be, belong not all to one side.

Of the Stillingfleet controversy I have given a particular account, in the 'Memoirs of Dr. Owen;' to which I must refer the reader who wishes for information respecting the several parties who engaged in it. I shall now confine myself, in a great measure, to the publications of Baxter, who laboured more abundantly than all the others.

The Dean's sermon appears to have produced a strong impression on Baxter's mind. Dr. Hicks mentions that a friend of his calling shortly after its publication on Dr. Cox,[n] there found Mr. Baxter vehemently inveighing against it; which led the gentleman to ask him, why he was so severe upon that sermon and its author, and took no notice of another, then newly come out, which had given the men of his party as much offence. What sermon is that? said Baxter. Dr. Tillotson's (the dean of Canterbury's) court sermon; in which he tells you "that you must not affront the established religion, nor openly draw men off from the profession of it." "Oh," replied Mr. Baxter, "he gave us great offence indeed; but he hath cried *peccavi*, and

[n] Dr. Cox was the husband of Mrs. Mary Cox, for whom Baxter preached a funeral sermon.—See *Works*, vol. xvii. p. 91. He was the particular friend of Baxter, as appears from his interferences on his behalf on various occasions. He rose to the head of his profession, being president of the College of Physicians till 1683, when he was deprived of the office for being whiggishly inclined.

made us satisfaction. But your other dean, is a proud, haughty man, and will retract nothing."

Dr. Birch doubts the fact of Tillotson's crying *peccavi* to the dissenters. It is very clear, however, from Calamy's Life of Howe, that he was exceedingly sorry for having preached and published that sermon; the main argument of which is subversive of Protestantism, and indeed of Christianity itself. On its publication, Baxter drew up a treatise on the subject, and sent it in manuscript to the dean. It produced the following letter from him in answer; which illustrates the amiable character of Tillotson; shows the esteem in which he held Baxter, and saved the latter from a public controversy with him. It shows, also, the probable ground on which Baxter spoke of Tillotson's confession.

"Reverend Sir, June 2nd, 1680.

"I received your letter, and the papers inclosed, which having perused, I do now return. I cannot think myself to be really much concerned in them, because they grant all along that the obligation of duty ceaseth, where there is no probability of success: and this principle is the true ground and bottom of my assertion. So that, unless upon the same principle opposite conclusions can be built, there must be some mistake in the reasoning of one side. But whether I be really concerned in it or not, I have great reason to think that it will generally be believed that this discourse is particularly designed against me, and that the same malice, which raised so groundless a clamour against my late sermon, will be very glad to find me struck at in the odious company of Spinosa and Mr. Hobbes, as of the same atheistical principles with them; a blow which I least expected, and for that reason should be very much surprised to receive from your hand. I would be glad to meet with that kindness and candour which I have ever used towards others; but if that may not be, I must content myself with the conscience of having endeavoured to deserve well of all men, and of the truth itself. I am, Sir, with great sincerity, as I have always been,

"Your affectionate Friend and Servant,
JOHN TILLOTSON."[o]

The first thing Baxter published in this controversy, was

[o] Birch's Life of Tillotson, p. 419.

his 'Answer to Dr. Edward Stillingfleet's Charge of Separation.' 1680. 4to. In this pamphlet he publishes a correspondence which took place between Stillingfleet and himself, occasioned by the dean's sermon. He inserts some queries which he proposed to the dean, to elicit a more explicit account of the accusation; a reply to the letter which Stillingfleet wrote him, declining to answer these queries, and an answer to the printed sermon. There is one passage in this reply to Stillingfleet, in which Baxter poses him with the doctrine of his former work in a way that he must have found very unpalatable. It is an unanswerable reply to all who give up the *jus divinum*, and yet found a charge of schism or separation on those who dissent from them.

"I remember, your Irenicum learnedly maintaineth, that God hath instituted no one form of church government as necessary. And if so, then not a national church form. And is it not a complete church if it be without a form, which not God, but man, is the author of? Then God made or instituted no such thing as a complete church. Then is it a human creation? Then why may not man make yet many forms, and multiply, and make, and unmake, as he seeth cause; and several countries have several forms? And *forma dat nomen et esse.* And if God made not any complete church, we should be acquainted who they be that had power to make a first church form; and who hath the power ever since; and how it is proved, and how it cometh to be any great matter to separate from a church form which God never made; and whether human church forms be not essential and constitutive causes of the churches. Whether every commanded oath, subscription, declaration, office, or ceremony, be an essential part of this church form. Whether there be as many church forms and species, as there be orders, liturgies, and ceremonies. And whether all these differences in the same kingdom, constitute so many schisms and separations."

Stillingfleet took up Baxter and his other antagonists in his 'Unreasonableness of Separation;' a large quarto volume published in 1681. In this work, he professes to give an historical account of the separation from the church of England, and of the various pleas advanced in support of that separation by the several parties, with such answers as he considered satisfactory, or which exposed, as he conceived, the inconsistency of his leading opponents. Stillingfleet was a man of profound learn-

ing, and distinguished abilities. He spared no pains in this discussion to establish his main position,—that the dissenters had very unreasonably separated from the church of England. He succeeds chiefly in exposing the inconsistency of some of their arguments with their other principles and some parts of their conduct. But, in this, he had no particular reason to triumph, as his own consistency was very far from perfect. The rector of Sutton, who wrote the Irenicum when the church of England was but a sect among other sects, was a very different person from the dean of St. Paul's, exposing the unreasonableness of separation from an apostolic church in all its glory. The one publication breathes a spirit of moderation, and uses the language of entreaty; the other is stern, severe, and uncompromising.

While Baxter was preparing to meet Stillingfleet, he was assailed by several other adversaries, in reply to whom he produced, 'A Third Defence of the Cause of Peace, proving the Need of Concord and the Impossibility of it on the Terms of the Present Impositions.' 8vo. 1681. This volume contains, first: a reply to John Hinckley, D.D., rector of Northfield, Worcestershire, and prebendary of Wolverhampton. He had published, in 1680, '*Fasciculus Literarium;* or, Letters on several occasions, betwixt Mr. Baxter and the Author of the Persuasive to Conformity.' This volume contains four letters of Hinckley's, and four from Baxter in reply, on the subject of Nonconformity, which had been written several years before. It is to the last of Hinckley's letters in this book, that Baxter replies in his 'Defence.' The controversy between them is a very sharp one; there is a large portion of history in Baxter's answer.

The second thing in the 'Defence,' is an answer to another silly production of Cheney's, 'A Fardel of Dotage and shameless Lies;' which was not therefore deserving of the attention Baxter bestowed on it.

The third thing in the 'Defence,' is 'Truth Pleading for Peace, against the many Falsehoods of an unnamed Impleader, who pretendeth to answer several writings of Richard Baxter.' This nameless impleader was Long, of Exeter, the sworn foe of Baxter. 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace impleaded,' is in the character of all his other publications against Baxter and his brethren, and was accordingly treated by him as it deserved. There is also a short note on a book against the

dissenters, by a person of the name of Varney; and a few remarks on the 'Speculum,' and the 'Casuist Uncased,' of Roger L'Estrange. "Mr. L'Estrange," he says, "quite mistakes the Nonconformist question, as the Reflector does; as if hissing and stinging were disputing. He seemeth to make the question to be, Whether I be not a giddy, mutable fool and knave. Let him in that believe what pleases himself. Our question is, whether silencing, fining, imprisoning the Nonconformists, be the way of peace, and of the desired concord of Protestants? Yea, whether concord be possible on those terms, and whether they will ever end our divisions?"

In reply to the elaborate performance of Stillingfleet, Baxter published 'A Second True Defence of the Mere Nonconformists, against the untrue accusations, reasonings, and history of Dr. Edward Stillingfleet.' 1681. 4to. In this volume, he endeavours to prove that it is "not a sin but a duty not wilfully to commit the many sins of conformity; not sacrilegiously to abandon the preaching of the Gospel, or the public worship of God, though men forbid it, and call it schism." He shows successfully that Stillingfleet, in his controversy with the Roman Catholics, had maintained the same principles which he now impugned in the Nonconformists, and that he does great injustice to the latter in many of his historical statements. One passage, in reference to himself, deserves to be extracted:

"I perceive Dr. Stillingfleet marvelleth, that my own expectations of approaching death do not hinder me from writing what I do for the Nonconformists; whereas, the truth is, had not pain and weakness kept me from my youth as in the continual prospect of the grave and the next life, I had never been like to have been so much against conformity, and the present discipline of this church (that is, its want of discipline), as I have been. For the world might have more flattered me, and biassed my judgment, and my conscience might have been bolder and less fearful of sin. And though I love not to displease, I must say this great truth, that I had never been like to have lived in so convincing, sensible experience of the great difference of the main body of the Conformists, from most of the Nonconformists, as to the seriousness of their Christian faith, and hope, and practice, their victory over the flesh and the world; I mean both of the clergy and laity of mine acquaintance. O! how great a difference have I found from my

youth to this day. Though I doubt not but very many of the passive conformable ministers (to say nothing of the imposers) have been and are worthy pious men, and such as would not persuade their hearers that the Jesuits first brought in spiritual prayer. And I had the great blessing of my education near four such, in three or four neighbour parishes."

The candour of this confession greatly prepossesses us in favour of the writer, and is almost a pledge of the correctness of his other statements. Stillingfleet had made many personal reflections on Baxter in his book, from which he vindicates himself very successfully. He had referred to the case of Kidderminster, which leads Baxter to give an interesting account of his conduct while there towards the episcopal Conformists, who were not then legally tolerated; he not only did not interfere with them, or solicit the interference of the magistrates, but gave them all the countenance in his power. The attempts which have frequently been made to show that the Episcopalians were persecuted during the Commonwealth, have uniformly failed. It was not the *religious*, but the *political* Episcopalians who were the objects of Cromwell's jealousy; and their opposition to his government was the sole cause of any interference which they ever experienced.

Stillingfleet himself did not answer Baxter's second Defence, but it was taken up by some others who were exceedingly zealous in his cause, and in that of the church; though not very judicious in the measures which they adopted. Dr. Sherlock published anonymously, first a thick 8vo volume, entitled, 'A Discourse about Church Unity; being a Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet's Unreasonableness of Separation, in answer to several late Pamphlets, but principally to Dr. Owen and Mr. Baxter.' 1681. And in the following year, in another volume, 'A Continuation and Vindication of the Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet, in answer to Mr. Baxter, Mr. Lob, and others.' He boldly affirms that "Whoever separates himself from the church of England cuts himself off from the Catholic church, and puts himself out of a state of salvation. Separation from the church of England is a schism, and schism is as damning a sin as idolatry, drunkenness, or adultery."[p] This is being very plain, but it is a pitiful *brutum fulmen*.

Mr. Long also appeared as the second of Dr. Stillingfleet, in 'The Unreasonableness of Separation, the Second Part; or, a

[p] Continuation, p. 389.

further Impartial Account of the History, Nature, and Pleas, of the present Separation from the Church of England: with Special Remarks on the Life and Actions of Richard Baxter.' 1682. 8vo. This is, perhaps, the vilest and most malicious of all the attacks made upon Baxter. In reference to it, he says, "Long, of Exeter, wrote so fierce a book to prove me, out of my own writings, one of the worst men living on earth, that I never saw any thing like it. And being overwhelmed with work, and weakness, and pains; and having least zeal to defend a person so bad as I know myself to be, I never answered him, it being none of the matters in controversy, whether I be good or bad. God be merciful to me a sinner!" [q]

A third writer who appeared with his name in this controversy, was Richard Hooke, D. D., vicar of Halifax. He published the 'Nonconformist Champion; his Challenge Accepted; or, an Answer to Mr. Baxter's Petition for Peace: with Remarks on his Holy Commonwealth, his Sermon to the House of Commons, his Nonconformists' Plea, and his Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet.' 1682. 8vo. There is a vast deal of vaunting and vapouring in this little book; but it is one thing to accept of a challenge, and another to come off with the victory. Baxter did not take up Dr. Hooke's glove, which probably mortified him in no small degree. The most curious of the publications that appeared about this time against Baxter, and certainly the wittiest of all L'Estrange's productions, was 'The Casuist Uncased, in a Dialogue betwixt Richard and Baxter, with a Moderator between them for quietness' sake.' 4to. It is a witty pamphlet, but wickedly intended; yet the writings of Baxter furnished ample means for such a production, and it cannot be denied that Sir Roger makes a very dexterous use of them. The dialogue is often very humorous; so that it is impossible not to smile at the joke, while we regret the object for which it is furnished. Baxter took it all very coolly. "I have never had the schooling of L'Estrange," he says, "and so never taught him to understand my writings, and therefore undertake not, that things congruous shall not seem contradictions to him." [r]

In connexion with this same controversy, Baxter published 'A Search for the English Schismatic; by the case and character, 1. Of the Diocesan Canoneers; 2. Of the present Mere Nonconformists. Not as an *accusation* of the *former*, but a

[q] Life, part iii. p. 188. [r] Third Defence, part ii. p. 151.

necessary *defence* of the *latter*, so far as they are wrongfully accused and persesuted by them.' 4to. 1681. Of the origin and design of this performance, he gives the following account: "Because the accusation of schism is it that maketh all the noise against the Nonconformists, in the mouths of their persecutors, I wrote a few sheets, called, 'A Search for the English Schismatic,' comparing the principles and practices of both parties, and leaving it to the reader to judge who is the schismatic; showing that the Prelatists have, in their canons, *ipso facto* excommunicated all the nobility, gentry, clergy, and people, who do but affirm, that there is any thing sinful in their liturgy, ceremonies, or church-government, even the lowest officer. Their laws cast us out of the ministry into gaols, and then they call us schismatics, for not coming to their churches; yea, though we come to them constantly, as I have done, if we will not give over preaching ourselves, when the parishes I lived in had, one fifty thousand, the other twenty thousand souls in it, more than could come within the church-doors. This book also, and my 'Prognostication,' and, what I valued most, my 'True and Only Way of Universal Concord,' were railed at, but never answered that I know of."[s]

Having finished our account of the Stillingfleet controversy, we must now advert to some other publications of Baxter on Nonconformity about this time. The most important is his 'Treatise of Episcopacy; confuting by Scripture, reason, and the church's testimony, that sort of diocesan churches, prelacy, and government, which casteth out the primitive church species, episcopacy, ministry, and discipline; and confoundeth the Christian world by corruption, usurpation, schism, and persecution.' 1681. 4to. His own account of this volume presents a very accurate view of its nature and object. "Upon Mr. Henry Dodwell's provocation, I published a treatise of epicopacy, that had lain long by me; which fully openeth our judgment upon the difference between the old episcopacy and our new diocesans, and answereth almost all the chief writers which have written for such prelacy, especially Bishop Downame, Dr. Hammond, Saravia, Spalatensis, &c. I think I may freely say it is elaborate; and had it not done somewhat effectually in the undertaken cause, some one or other would have answered it ere now. It makes me admire that my 'Catholic Theology,' our

[s] Life, part iii. pp. 188, 189.

'Reformed Liturgy,' my 'Second Plea for Peace,' (that I say not the first also,) and this 'Treatise of Episcopacy,' could never procure an answer from any of these fierce accusing men; whereas the subjects of these four books are the controversies of the age, and which are by these men so much insisted on. But I have since found some explication about the English diocesans necessary; which the Separatists forced me to publish by misunderstanding me." [t]

This is one of the most elaborate and valuable of Baxter's works on the Nonconformist controversy, and shows how very fully he entered into the whole subject. It is divided into two parts, in which, in a succession of chapters, he treats at great length of the primitive episcopacy, ministry, and discipline, of the early churches; the origin and progress of diocesan churches and episcopacy, and the corruption that crept into them, with the various consequences which have arisen from these changes. There is a large portion of sound learning and accurate reasoning in the work, so that it is not surprising Baxter felt disappointed at no attempt being made to answer it. He successfully shows that "the episcopal churches of the Holy Ghost's institution, in the New Testament, were but single congregations, consisting of volunteers;" and that the bishops recognised by the apostles, were persons who had merely the spiritual oversight of such congregations. Hence he contends, that nothing but a return to this state of things, will ever effectually cure the evils of the church. Whether this work is considered as a piece of ecclesiastical history, or in connexion with the controversy respecting church government, it deserves to be consulted, and will contribute more to satisfy the mind than all the other books of Baxter together.

His next publication was, 'An Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry; containing the Reasons of their Preaching,' &c. 4to. 1681. The greater part of this book was written in 1668 and 1669, and at last published as an addition to the Defence of the Nonconformists, against Dr. Stillingfleet. He dedicates it to Compton, bishop of London, Barlow, bishop of Lincoln, Crofts, bishop of Hereford, Rainbow, bishop of Carlisle, Thomas, bishop of St. David's, and Lloyd, bishop of Peterborough, of whom he speaks as good men, and lovers of moderation. In the work itself, he meets the statements and mis-

[t] Life, part iii. p. 182.

representations of Bishop Morley, Dr. Saywell, Mr. Durel, a nameless Ecclesiastical Politician and Debate Maker, the Counterminer, Fowlis, Good, and many others. There are some very touching and eloquent passages in this work. The concluding address to the bishops is very powerful. He tells them plainly, that the blame of most of the sufferings which were endured by himself and his brethren, properly belonged to them. They either caused or occasioned the severe enactments which were made against the Nonconformists, or by their influence might have prevented them. He beseeches them to consider the awful responsibility of preventing the preaching of the Gospel by so many faithful men, whose places were so inadequately supplied, and warns them of the guilt which they thus contracted.

"I am not so foolish," he says, "as not to know that all this talk is grievous to you, and not the way to my ease, or honour with you, nor to procure favour in your eyes. But if in such a day, and in such a case, we should all be silent, and none so much as call you to repentance, nor plead the cause of an injured Saviour and deserted souls, we should partake of the crimes which we are lamenting; and not only Gildas and Salvianus, and such-like, but all the prophets and apostles would condemn us.

"And if all that is here said have no other effect than to increase your indignation and our sufferings; judge, O posterity! judge all disinterested impartial men, between these reverend lords and us; whether the petitions here presented to them, be selfish, or unreasonable, or such as should be rejected at so dear a rate as our lamentable divisions and church distractions come to! Yea, Christ, whose cause and interest we plead, will certainly and shortly judge; before whom their worldly grandeur and dignities will be insignificant; wrathful reproaches will not prove the innocent criminal, nor justify them that condemn the just, or that will not understand the will and interest of their Lord. Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen." [u]

The last publication in this department which remains to be noticed, is 'The English Nonconformity, as under King Charles II. and King James II.; truly stated and argued.' 4to. This is a considerable volume, containing sixty-two chapters, in

[u] Life, part iii. pp. 235, 236. It was about this time, though I do not know that it was in answer to this book, that a pamphlet, with the following title, appeared, 'Kidderminster-Stuff; or, a Remnant of Mr. Baxter's Fraudes unravelled.' 4to. 1681. I have not seen it.

which the whole Nonconformist controversy is argued in a series of dialogues between a minister and a lawyer. As it was published not long before the death of Baxter, it may fairly be considered as containing his last sentiments on those points which had for so many years occupied a great portion of his attention. It was all written a considerable time before the Revolution, though published shortly after it, and while the final settlement of the government was still future. No one of the numerous works of Baxter furnishes so full, clear, and satisfactory a view of nonconformity as this volume. It contains less of personal reference and debate, and is more restricted to principles, than any of the others; so that those who wish to ascertain with the least trouble the sentiments of Baxter, will consult this work to advantage. [x]

Having brought our account of Baxter's works on Nonconformity to a termination, it may be proper to offer a few concluding observations. To many it will appear strange and improper that he should have employed so much time on this subject. They will be ready to ask with surprise and indignation, To what purpose was this waste? Such persons overlook the state of the times, and the peculiar situation of Baxter. The spirit of oppression and persecution then raged in the most violent manner. Many of the persecutors were men respectable in point of moral character, and a large portion professed a great regard for the interests of religion. Baxter suffered considerably himself, but he felt more for the sufferings of his brethren, than on his own account. Many of them had been driven from situations of important usefulness, separated from their families, condemned to exile and imprisonment, and suffered the loss of all things. It would have been unchristian and unmanly to remain silent while these things went on, if, by expostulation, apology, or vindication, any impression could be made.

Baxter might be considered as at the head of a large portion at least of his suffering brethren; all of whom respected his character, and admired his intrepidity. He was more independent in his circumstances than most of them. He was well known at court, and had considerable influence with some of the nobility. His disinterestedness was beyond sus-

[x] A kind of answer was published to this work in a pamphlet, entitled, 'Reflections on Mr. Baxter's Last Book, called English Nonconformity,' &c. 4to. 1689.

picion, and he was utterly regardless of all personal consequences to himself. On every emergency he was looked up to for advice; and in time of danger, his wisdom and prowess were trusted to lead on the attack, or to cover a retreat.

If he erred in appearing too often, and sometimes on occasions which scarcely required him to expose himself or his cause, it was an error of judgment only. It was the excess of zeal for the good of others, not the gratification of any selfish or sordid passion. He was often singled out as an object of attack by petty scribblers, whose motive was to excite attention to themselves, rather than a desire to do good, or the hope that they would make an impression on the champion of Nonconformity. The silent disregard of such a man was more provoking than his severest animadversion. To the notice which he took of many of them, their names are now indebted for existence; they are known, not as the writers of any thing which any body reads, but as the adversaries of Richard Baxter.

In the state of the country from the time of the Restoration till the Revolution, it was of great importance that the Nonconformist controversy should be kept alive. It tended to support the spirits of the sufferers, to preserve the flame of liberty from being altogether smothered, to keep in check those arbitrary and oppressive measures which would have proved as ruinous to the constitution of the country, as to the liberties of the Nonconformists. Nothing but a great deal of writing, and writing with force and severity, could have answered the purpose. It was necessary to speak of persecution and oppression by their proper names, and to expose them in their own colours. As there was no moderation in the measures by which the consciences of men were invaded, and their dearest rights infringed, it would be absurd to expect nothing but calmness and moderation in the writings of those who suffered and resisted; yet in general the Nonconformists wrote like Christians; and in meekness acquitted themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

WORKS ON POPERY.

Introductory Observations—'The Safe Religion'—'Winding-Sheet for Popery'—'Grotian Religion'—Controversy with Peirce, Womack, Heylin, and Bramhall—'Key for Catholics'—'Successive Visibility of the Church'—Controversy with Johnson—'Fair Warning'—'Difference between the Power of Church Pastors and the Roman Kingdom'—'Certainty of Christianity without Popery'—'Full and Easy Satisfaction, which is the True Religion'—Dedicated to Lauderdale—'Christ, not the Pope, the Head of the Church'—'Roman Tradition Examined'—'Naked Popery'—Controversy with Hutchinson—'Which is the True Church'—'Answer to Dodwell'—'Dissent from Sherlock'—'Answer to Dodwell's Letter calling for more Answers'—'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction'—'Protestant Religion truly stated'—Conclusion.

The doctrines and the friends of Popery had too much influence in England during the life of Baxter, not to engage his attention on a subject which had employed the pens of the ablest men from the period of the Reformation. In point of argument, every thing necessary to expose the absurd and wicked pretensions of the see of Rome, had been said long before the time of Baxter. But the interests involved in the Popish controversy were too great, and the parties engaged in supporting them too subtle, to allow the subject to sleep, or even to slumber. The well-known leanings of the Stuart family to a system more favourable than any other to their besetting sin,—the love of arbitrary power; their family alliances with its sworn defenders, their patronage of those who were considered favourable to the principles or the spirit of Popery, with many other circumstances,—kept alive the hopes of the Roman Catholics that England, one of the fairest gems in the tiara, would yet be brought back to its allegiance, and be numbered among the jewels of the Papal See.

Even the civil wars and their results did not altogether extinguish these hopes. The emissaries of Rome were active throughout their entire duration, and were considered as sometimes having a hand in the events which took place. Though Baxter certainly was credulous, we can scarcely conceive that he had no authority for asserting what he often did—that Romish priests assumed the guise of sectaries, appeared zealous in sowing dissensions, and propagating wild and extravagant opinions. His notions of the extent to which this prevailed, were probably exaggerated; but it was quite to the purpose of the Catholics to act in this manner: as the more furious the fanaticism of Protestants, the more would the necessity for an infallible head appear, and the sooner would the country be likely to become tired of its apostacy.[a] However this may have been, Baxter felt it to be his duty, both as a Christian and a Protestant, to oppose strenuously a system which he regarded as most ungodly in its pretensions, and most injurious in its influence to the interests of liberty, of sound morality, and of religion. To take this ground, and to appear in the front rank of the advocates of Protestantism, and of the adversaries of the Romish faith, were with Baxter one act.

He accordingly published, in 1657, 'The Safe Religion, or Three Disputations for the Reformed Catholic Religion against Popery;' in which he endeavours to prove that Popery is against the Holy Scriptures, against the unity of the catholic

[a] The opinion that Catholic priests were employed as disguised Puritans, or sowers of division, is not peculiar to Baxter. Sir W. Boswell, in a letter to Archbishop Laud, dated from the Hague, in the year 1640, informs him that above sixty Romish clergymen had gone, within two years, from France, to preach the Scotch covenant and the rules of that kirk, and to spread the same about the northern coasts of England; and that their great object was to effect the ruin of English Episcopacy.—*Usher's Life*, Appendix, p. 27. Bramhall, bishop of Derry, in 1654, assures Archbishop Usher that, in the year 1646, by order from Rome, above a hundred of the Romish clergy were sent into England, consisting of English, Scotch, and Irish, who had been educated in France, Italy, Germany, and Spain. These, he says, were mostly soldiers in the army of the Parliament. Even in 1654, he affirms that there were many priests at Paris preparing to be sent over, who held meetings twice a week, in which they opposed one another, some pretending to be for Presbytery, others for Independency, and others for Anabaptism. That their qualifications for the work in which they were to engage, were judged of by the learned superiors of some of the convents; that the parties were entered in the registers of their respective orders, but with different names, which they were to use and change as circumstances might require; and that they kept up a regular correspondence with their fraternities abroad. —*Usher*, p. 611.

church, the consent of the ancient doctors, the plainest reason, and the common judgment of sense itself. The object of the first dissertation is, to prove that the religion of Protestants is safe; of the second, that Popery is unsafe; and of the third, that the manner in which Popery is sustained in argument by a claim to infallibility, is subversive of the faith. It is dedicated to the "Literate Romanists," and is on the whole an able exposure and refutation of the system of Popery, to which I am not aware that any answer was ever made.

As that was a considerable volume, and better adapted to the learned than to the unlearned, he published in the same year, 'A Winding-sheet for Popery,' comprising, within a few pages, the most appropriate arguments against the whole system. This was well fitted for popular reading and general circulation; which also remained unanswered.

His next work, though small, and but little of it on the subject of Popery, forms part of a very angry controversy, in which he became involved, with several persons of considerable note. In his work on 'Universal Concord,' published in the early part of 1658, he had thought it his duty to warn some who appeared to be prosecuting the design of Grotius and Cassander, to reconcile the Protestant churches to the see of Rome, on certain abatements being made by that see to the principles or prejudices of Protestants. The insinuation that Grotius was a concealed Papist, and that others were engaged in a similar plan, excited very strong emotions in the breasts of Dr. Sanderson and Dr. Thomas Peirce. The latter, in a work entitled 'The Self-revenger exemplified,' directed against Mr. Barlee, demanded from Baxter a plainer account of Grotius, and his followers. This Baxter was not unwilling to give him. But we must hear his own account of this controversy.

"Peirce's principal business," he says, "was to defend Grotius. In answer to which I wrote a little treatise, called 'The Grotian Religion discovered,' in which I cited his own words, especially out of his 'Discussio Apologetici Rivetiani,' where he openeth his terms of reconciliation with Rome, viz., that it be acknowledged the mistress church, and the Pope have his supreme government; not arbitrary, but only according to the canons. To which end he defendeth the Council of Trent itself, Pope Pius's oath, and all the councils; which is no other than the French sort of Popery. I had not then heard of the

book written in France called 'Grotius Papizans,' nor of 'Sarravius's Epistles,' in which he witnesseth it from his own mouth. But the very words which I cited, contain an open profession of Popery.

"In a preface before this book, I vindicated the Synod of Dort from the abusive, virulent accusations of one that called himself Tilenus, junior. Thereupon, Peirce wrote a much more railing, malicious volume than the former; the liveliest impress of Satan's image, malignity, bloody malice, and falsehood, covered in handsome, railing rhetoric, that ever I have seen from any that called himself a Protestant. The preface was answered just in the same manner, by one who styled himself Philo-Tilenus. Three such men as this Tilenus, junior, Peirce, and Gunning, I have not heard of besides in England: of the Jesuits' opinion in doctrinals, and of the old Dominican complexity, yet the ablest men that their party hath in all the land; of great diligence in study and reading; of excellent oratory, especially Tilenus, junior, and Peirce; and of temperate lives. But all their parts are so sharpened with a furious, persecuting zeal against those that dislike Arminianism, high prelacy, or full conformity, that they are like the briars and thorns, which are not to be touched, but by a fenced hand. They breathe out threatenings against God's servants, better than themselves, and seem unsatisfied with blood and ruin, but still cry, 'Give, give;' bidding as loud defiance to Christian charity, as ever Arius, or any heretic, did to faith.

"This book of mine, of the Grotian religion, greatly offended many others, but none of them could speak any sense against it; the citations, for matter of fact, being unanswerable. And it was only the matter of fact which I undertook to prove, viz., that Grotius professed himself a moderate Papist; but for his fault in so doing, I little meddled with it." [b]

Such is Baxter's own account of this controversy, which related as much in its progress to Arminianism, as to Grotius and Popery. The religion of Grotius must have been of a very equivocal kind, for as many sects seem to have contended for him, as cities about the birth of Homer. The fact is, he mixed too much in the political world not to be seriously injured by it. He speculated about union, and falsely imagined that it might be practicable to effect some agreement between the Catholics and Protestants, on principles in which neither

[b] Life, part i. p. 113.

party would agree. He was not a Papist in the technical sense of the term, but he endeavoured to give an orthodox interpretation to some of the doctrines of Popery, and objected to some of the charges preferred by Protestants against the church of Rome; which, with his disposition to compromise, led the Protestants to look at him with great jealousy.[c]

Baxter's opinion of Grotius, notwithstanding these views of his sentiments, which were probably more influenced by political than religious considerations, stood very high. He was in every respect a distinguished man—his learning, his talents, his love of liberty, his amiable dispositions, must make his memory dear to all who are capable of estimating his virtues and acquirements.

Tilenus, junior, was a fictitious name, assumed by Bishop Womack, in his attacks upon Calvinism and the Puritans.[d] 'The Examination of Tilenus before the Triers, in order to his intended settlement in the office of a public Preacher in the Commonwealth of Utopia,' is a keen sarcastic pamphlet which appeared in 1658,[e] intended to expose the conduct of the Triers, and the sentiments which they held. It describes a trial of this said Tilenus, before a jury consisting of Messrs. Absolute, Fatality, Preterition, Fryable, Damman, Narrow-Grace, *alias* Stint-Grace, Efficax, Indefectible, Confidence, Dubious, Meanwell, Simulans, Take-o-trust, Know-little, and Impertinent.

[c] Lord Lauderdale says, in one of his letters to Baxter, "I have read your reply to Peirce, in which you fully satisfy me that Grotius was a Papist. I was acquainted with Grotius at Paris. He was then ambassador for Sweden, in the year 1637; and though I was then very young, some visits passed between us. My discourse with him was only on humanity; but I remember well he was then esteemed such a Papist as you call a Cassandrian, and so ....did esteem him, who was a priest—the owner of that great library now printed in his name. With him I was also acquainted. He was a great admirer of Grotius, and esteemed among his principal friends."—*Baxter MSS.*

[d] Daniel Tilenus was professor of divinity at Sedan, and, in the early part of his life, a Calvinist. He afterwards adopted the sentiments of the Remonstrants, and took part, both in their opposition to Calvinism, and in their sufferings on account of it. Among other things, he wrote 'Canones Synodi Dordracenæ, cum notis et animadversionibus,' &c. A tract of his appeared in English, under the title of 'The Doctrine of the Synods of Dort and Alez brought to the Proof of Practice,' &c. 1629. On this foundation Womack appears to have adopted his designation of Tilenus, junior, and to have constructed his pamphlet, 'The Examination of Tilenus.' Womack was a very decided Arminian, and thoroughly acquainted with the writers of the Dutch school. He died bishop of St. David's, in 1685.

[e] This pamphlet is republished by Mr. Nichols in his 'Calvinism and Arminianism Compared.'

The leading characters of the day are said to have been introduced under these fictitious names; Narrow-Grace being supposed to be designed for Philip Nye, and Dr. Dubious for Richard Baxter. There is a good deal of severe humour, as might be expected, in the book, besides a vast portion of misrepresentation and caricature.

'The Grotian Religion' brought forward Womack a second time in his 'Arcana Dogmatum Anti-remonstrantium; or, the Calvinist's Cabinet unlocked, in an apology for Tilenus, against a pretended vindication of the Synod of Dort, at the provocation of Mr. Richard Baxter, held forth in the Preface to his Grotian Religion.' 1659. 8vo. This is a grand attack on the doctrines of the synod of Dort, and on Baxter, as holding substantially those doctrines, from which it is very evident that the author never supposed Baxter would be suspected of Arminianism. Tilenus is one of the stoutest and acutest adversaries with whom Baxter had to contend. He was well acquainted with the whole range of the Arminian controversy, and had examined every syllable of Baxter's writings; from which he did not fail to extract passages, the explaining or reconciling of which must have tried even the metaphysical acuteness of Baxter. It does not appear from any thing which Baxter wrote, that he knew Bishop Womack to be the author of these performances.

Peirce's reply, of which Baxter speaks so severely, was 'The New Discoverer discovered; by way of Answer to Baxter's pretended Discovery of the Grotian Religion, with the several subjects contained therein.' 1658. 4to. The quarrel between them was kept up to a very distant period; and the personal feelings of Peirce were discovered in a manner not the most creditable to himself. Indeed, the high-church Arminian clergy generally appear to have been greatly annoyed by this trifling tract of Baxter's. An expression in the preface where he refers to Peter Heylin's mode of describing the Puritans, led to a lengthened correspondence with that bigoted and intemperate polemic. This correspondence Heylin published with a very characteristic title: 'The Letter Combat managed by Peter Heylin, D.D., with Mr. Baxter of Kidderminster, Dr. Bernard of Gray's Inn, Mr. Hickman of Mag. Col. Ox. &c.' 1659. 8vo. That the party to which Baxter was opposed, were justly regarded by him as leaning to Popery, is evident from a single sentence in Heylin's last letter: "So far, I assure you, I am of the religion of Hugh Grotius, that I wish as heartily as he

did, that the breaches in the walls of Jerusalem were well closed up; that the Puritans, submitting to the church of England, and the church of England being reconciled with the church of Rome, we might unite and centre in those sacred truths, those undeniable principles and established doctrines, which have been universally received in the church of Christ, and in which all parties do agree." This is only one among many proofs of the strong feeling which prevailed among the high-church clergy towards the church of Rome.[f]

Many years afterwards, a posthumous work was published, entitled, 'Bishop Bramhall's Vindication of himself and the Episcopal Clergy from the Presbyterian charge of Popery, as it is managed by Mr. Baxter in his Treatise of the Grotian Religion.' 1672. 12mo. Bramhall and his coadjutors had so much of the Popery of Protestantism about them, as to be justly liable to the charge which Baxter and others preferred against them. Of this book, Baxter says:

"He passeth over the express words of Grotius, which I had cited, which undoubtedly prove what I said; yea, though I had since largely Englished them, and recited them in the second part of my 'Key for Catholics,' with a full confirmation of my proofs. And he feigneth me to make him a Grotian, and confederate in his design; whereas I not only had no such word, but had expressly excepted him by name, as imputing no such thing to him. Before the book was a long preface of Mr. Parker's, most vehement against Dr. Owen, and somewhat against myself. To which Andrew Marvel, a parliament man, burgess for Hull, did publish an answer so exceeding jocular, as thereby procured abundance of readers, and pardon to the author. Because I perceived that the design of Bishop Bramhall's book was for the uniting of Christendom under the old patriarchs of the Roman imperial church, and so under the Pope, as the Western Patriarch, and *Principium Unitatis*, I had thought the design, and this publication, looked dangerously, and therefore began to write an answer to it. But Mr. Simmons, my bookseller, came to me, and told me, that Roger

[f] 'A Review of the Certamen Epistolare betwixt Dr. Heylin and Mr. Hickman' was published in a small volume in 1659, under the fictitious name of Theophilus Churchman. It is called by the writer himself a *Joco-seria* review of the counter-scuffle; the object of which is chiefly to vindicate the English reformers from being Arminians, which Heylin had wished to make them. It is cleverly written, and gives some hard blows to Dr. Heylin.

L'Estrange, the overseer of the printers, had sent for him, and told him, that he heard I was answering Bishop Bramhall, and swore to him most vehemently, that if I did it, he would ruin him and me, and perhaps my life should be brought in question. I perceived the bookseller durst not print it; and so I was fain to cast it by, which I the easier did, because the main scope of all the book was fully answered long before, in the foresaid second part of my 'Key for Catholics.'" [g]

We must now return from this Grotian digression to the controversy. Baxter's next work in this department, is the 'Key for Catholics.' 1659. 4to. The object of this work was to expose the juggling of the Jesuits; to satisfy those who were willing to understand, whether the cause of the Roman or the Reformed churches is of God: and to leave the reader utterly inexcusable who should afterwards continue a Papist. The first part of it contains an exposure of forty frauds or deceptions practised by the Popish party; the second part is an attempt to show that the *Catholic* church is not a political body, headed by an earthly sovereign; and that such a unity as this would imply, is not to be desired. Here he again encounters Grotius and Peirce, on both of whom he makes some sharp remarks. The following is his account of this work and its reception:

"In this treatise, proving that the blood of the king is not by Papists to be charged upon Protestants, I plainly hazarded my life against the powers that then were, and grievously incensed Sir H. Vane. Yet Mr. J. N. was so tender of the Papists' interest, that having before been offended with me for a petition against Popery, he spake against it on the bench: and his displeasure being increased by this book, he took occasion, after the king came in, to write against me for those very passages which condemned the king-killers. Because, comparing the case with the doctrine and practice of the Papists, I showed that the Sectarians and Cromwellians had of the two a more plausible pretence, he confuted these pretences of theirs, as if they had been my own; thereby making the world believe that I wrote for the king's death, in the very pages where, to the hazard of my life, I wrote against it; while he himself took the engagement against the king and the House of Lords, was a justice under Oliver, and more than this, signed orders for the sequestering of others of the king's party. But the great indignation against this book and

[g] Life, part iii. p. 102.

the former, is, that they were, by epistles, directed to Richard Cromwell, as lord protector, which I did only to provoke him that had power, to use it well, when the Parliament had sworn fidelity to him; and that without any word of approbation of his title."[h]

The next work by Baxter on this controversy, the 'Successive Visibility of the Church,' 1660, 12mo, came out under very peculiar circumstances; for an account of which I again avail myself of his own statement: "When I was at Kidderminster, in 1659, one Mr. Langhorn, a furrier, in Walbrook, sent me a sheet of paper, subscribed by William Johnson, containing an argument against our church, for want of perpetual visibility; or, that none but the church of Rome, and those in communion with it, had been successively visible; casting all on his opponent, to prove our church's constant visibility. He that sent this paper desired me to answer it, as for some friends of his who were unsatisfied. I sent him an answer the next day after I received it. To this, some weeks after, I received a reply. This reply cited many fathers and councils, and, as the custom is, brought the controversy into the wood of church history. To this I drew up a large rejoinder, and sent it by the carrier. Though I was not rich enough to keep an amanuensis, and had not leisure myself to transcribe it; yet, as it well happened, I had got a friend to write me a copy of my rejoinder: for it fell out that the carrier lost the copy which I gave him to carry to London, and professed that he never knew what became of it. And no wonder, when I after learned that my antagonist lived within five or six miles of me, whom I supposed to have lived one hundred and fifty miles off. When I expected an answer, I received, a month after, an insulting challenge of a speedy answer, and this seconded with another: all calling for haste. I suppose he thought I had kept no copy; but as soon as I could get it transcribed I sent it him: and I heard no more of Mr. Johnson for a twelvemonth. When I was in London, I went to Mr. Langhorn, and desired him to procure me an answer to my papers from Mr. Johnson, or that I might know that I should have none. At last, he told me that Mr. Johnson

[h] Life, part i. p. 118. Baxter omitted the dedication to Richard Cromwell, in his second edition of the 'Key,' and substituted in its place one to the Duke of Lauderdale; not perhaps the happiest choice which he might have made of a patron. He declares, in the dedication to Lauderdale, that he never saw the face of Richard, nor ever had a word from him; and that his sole motive in addressing him was to stir him up to do good.

would come and speak with me himself, which he did, and would have put off all the business with a few words, but would promise me no answer. At last, by Mr. Tillotson,[1] I was informed that his true name was Terret; that he lived in the house of a certain nobleman, near our parts; that, being much in London, he was there the chief hector, or great disputer, for the Papists; and that he was the chief of the two men who had held and printed the dispute with Dr. Pearson and Dr. Gunning. When I saw what advantage he had got by printing that dispute, I resolved that he should not do so by me, and so I printed all our papers. But before I printed them, I urged him to some further conference; and at our next meeting I told him how necessary it was that we should agree first on the meaning of our terms. So I wrote down some few, as church, pope, council, bishop, heresy, schism, which I desired him to explain to me under his hand, promising him the like whenever he desired it; which, when I had got from him, I gave him some animadversions on it, showing their implications; to which he answered, and to that I replied. When he came no more to me, nor gave me any answer, I printed all together; which made him think it necessary, at last, to write a confutation; whereto I have since published a full rejoinder, to which I can procure no answer."[k]

The volume accordingly contains the first papers which passed between Johnson and Baxter; an appendix, in which he gives an account to Johnson, how far heretics are, or are not, in the church; Johnson's explanation of the most usual terms in the controversy, with Baxter's animadversions; a paper on successive ordination; and some letters which passed between Baxter and Thomas Smith, a Papist, with a narrative of the success.

This Johnson appears to have perverted from the truth Lady Anne Lindsey, daughter of the countess of Balcarras, who employed Baxter to endeavour to reclaim her. He tried it accordingly, but without effect. She made her escape from her mother, and went to France, where she died in a nunnery, a few years afterwards.[l]

In 1663, a pamphlet appeared with Baxter's name, called 'Fair Warning; or Twenty-five Reasons against Toleration and

[1] Afterwards Archbishop Tillotson.

[k] Life, part ii. pp. 218, 219.

[l] Ibid. pp. 219—228.

Indulgence of Popery.' For my knowledge of this tract I am indebted to the invaluable work of Hallam on the British Constitution, never having seen any copy of it myself. He says, it is a pleasant specimen of the *argumentum ab inferno*. "Seeing there is but one safe way to salvation, do you think that the Protestant way is that way, or is it not? If it be not, why do you live in it? If it be, how can you find in your heart to give your subjects liberty to go another way? Can you, in your conscience, give them leave to go on in that course, in which in your conscience you think you could not be saved?" Hallam adds, after making this quotation, "Baxter does not mention this little book in his Life; nor does he there speak violently about the toleration of Romanists." [m]

His next work in this controversy is, 'The Difference between the Power of Magistrates and Church Pastors, and the Roman Kingdom and Magistracy, under the name of a Church and Church Government usurped by the Pope, or liberally given him by Popish Princes.' 1671. 4to. This pamphlet consists of two letters addressed to Lewis Molinæus, M. D., the author of several books on the Romish controversy: and which had drawn Baxter's attention to the subject. His account of this book is curious.

"Ludovicus Molineus was so vehemently set upon the crying down of the papal and prelatical government, that he thought it was the work he was sent into the world for, to convince princes that all government was in themselves, and that no proper government, but only persuasion, belonged to the churches. To this end he wrote his 'Paræsis contra Ædificatiores Imperii in Imperio,' his 'Papa Ultrajectinus,' and other tractates; which he thrust on me, to make me of his mind. At last he wrote his 'Jugulum Causæ,' with no less than seventy epistles before it, directed to princes, and men of interest, among whom he was pleased to put one to me. The good man meant rightly in the main, but had not a head sufficiently accurate for such a controversy, and so could not perceive that any thing could be called properly *government*, that was no way *coactive* by corporal penalties. To turn him from the *Erastian* extreme, and end that controversy by a reconciliation, I published an hundred propositions conciliatory, and of the difference between the magistrate's power and the pastor's." [n]

He published, in 1672, 'The Certainty of Christianity with-

[m] Hallam's Constitutional Hist., vol. ii. p. 476. [n] Life, part iii. p. 85.

out Popery; or, whether the Catholic-Protestant or the Papist have the surer faith.' 8vo. This pamphlet, he tells us, was designed to meet the repeated challenges of the Papists, and to direct the unskilful how to defend their faith against them and against infidels also. To both descriptions of persons, he informs us in his Life, the work proved useful. The connexion between Popery and infidelity, or the tendency of the former to produce the latter, is closer than many persons suppose. To believe too much, may prove as dangerous as to believe too little. Faith without evidence, is credulity; a state of mind not more congenial to the influence of genuine religion, than unbelief itself. A system which wages war with the established principles of moral evidence, by requiring man to prostrate his understanding to the dictation of uninspired authority, and to act in opposition to the conviction of his senses, prepares him for believing any thing, however monstrous, and for rejecting any thing, however evident and true. In this way, Popery lays the foundation of infidelity; and enables us to account for the extraordinary fact, that in the countries where it has been longest and most firmly established, the greatest numbers of unbelievers have been found. The abetters of the system have been fond of maintaining that the overthrow of Popery must be the ruin of Christianity; which is all one with holding, that the subversion of a system of lying and imposition, must necessarily prove the ruin of truth and moral honesty.

'Full and Easy Satisfaction, which is the True and Safe Religion,' appeared in 1674, 8vo, along with the second edition of his 'Key for Catholics.' It is a dialogue between a doubter, a Papist, and a reformed Catholic Christian; and consists of four parts, in which he treats of the nature of the difference between the parties, justifies the Protestant, enumerates charges against the Roman Catholic, and insists particularly on the wickedness and absurdity of the doctrine of transubstantiation. It is dedicated to his grace the Duke of Lauderdale, his majesty's commissioner, and principal secretary for the kingdom of Scotland. Of this circumstance, and of the duke himself, he furnishes us with the following account.

"In the preface to the first impression, I had mentioned with praise the Earl of Lauderdale, as then prisoner by Cromwell in Windsor Castle, from whom I had many pious and learned letters, and who had so much read over all my books, that he remembered them better, as I thought, than I did myself.

Had I now left out that mention of him, it would have seemed an injurious recantation of my kindness; and to mention him now a duke, as then a prisoner, was unmeet. The king used him as his special counsellor and favourite. The parliament had set themselves against him. He still professed great kindness to me, and I had reason to believe it was without dissembling. Because he was accounted by all to be rather a too rough adversary, than a flatterer of one so low as I; and because he spake the same for me behind my back, that he did to my face. I had then a new piece against transubstantiation to add to my book, and, being desirous it should be read, I thought best to join it with the other, and prefix before both an epistle to the duke; in which I said not a word of him but the truth: and I did it the rather, that his name might cause some great ones to read, at least that epistle, if not the short additional tractate, in which I thought I said enough to open the shame of Popery. But the indignation men had against the duke, made some blame me, as keeping up the reputation of one whom multitudes thought very ill of; whereas I named none of his faults, and did nothing I could well avoid, for the aforesaid reasons. Long after this, he professed his kindness to me, and told me I should never want while he was able, and humbly entreated me to accept twenty guineas from him, which I did."*

The correspondence with Lauderdale, to which Baxter here refers, still exists, and is certainly very honourable to the character and talents of Lauderdale. His attachment, which he expresses in the warmest terms, to Baxter, appears to have been very sincere, as he not only translated passages from books for the use of Baxter, while he was a prisoner, and otherwise evinced his friendship for him, but when his fortunes afterwards changed, and he rose to eminence in the state, he continued to remember and befriend him. Yet it is impossible to think of the character of Lauderdale with respect. Like many other men, he shone in adversity, but was corrupted by prosperity.

In the 'Morning Exercises against Popery,' preached by the

* Life, part iii. p. 180. Baxter, in his dedication, speaks of the duke's extensive acquaintance with his writings, and of the reliance which he placed on his judgment. He was not the only man of learning who treated Lauderdale in this manner. Spanheim dedicates to him and Usher the third part of his 'Dubia Evangelica,' and speaks, though Lauderdale was then very young, of his "judicium supra ætatem maturum, verum omnium cognitione subactum pectus."

leading Nonconformist ministers about London, in the year 1675, Baxter delivered a discourse on 'Christ, not the Pope, the Universal Head of the Church.' These sermons were delivered in Southwark; and when it is mentioned that among the preachers were such men as Poole, Jenkyns, Vincent, Clarkson, Annesley, and Baxter, the ability with which the various subjects is discussed will at once be understood. The volume, containing the 'Discourses against Popery,' embraces the leading points in controversy between Catholics and Protestants, and abounds with learning and information. Considering the character of these discourses, and the state of the times when they were delivered, they afford strong proof of the decision and boldness by which the preachers were distinguished.

In the same year, 1675, he published 'Select Arguments against Popery,' which I have not seen, and cannot therefore judge whether they are original, or only a selection, in the form of a tract, of some of his reasonings in his other publications. I suspect they are the latter.

The appearance of a book, called, 'A Rational Discourse of Transubstantiation, in a Letter to a Person of Honour from a Master of Arts of the University of Cambridge,' led him to produce, in 1676, 'Roman Tradition examined, in the point of Transubstantiation.' 4to. The author of the work, to which this is an answer, was understood to be Mr. W. Hutchinson, of Lincolnshire, who wrote also 'Catholic Naked Truth, or the Puritan Convert to Apostolical Christianity;' in answer to which, Baxter wrote his 'Naked Popery; or, the Naked Falsehood of a book called the Catholic Naked Truth;'[p] which appeared in the same volume with his Roman Tradition, in 1677. Hutchinson was the son of pious Protestant parents, but forsook the faith in which he had been nurtured. In one

[p] The title of Hutchinson's, *alias* Berry's, book, which led to the corresponding title of Baxter's reply, appears to have been suggested by a work of Bishop Croft's, which was published shortly before that time, and occasioned a considerable sensation—'The Naked Truth; or, the True State of the Primitive Church.' 1675. 4to. It is a moderate book, intended to heal the divisions which then prevailed in the kingdom, and to reconcile the Church and the Nonconformists to each other. It was acceptable to the latter, but not to the high-church party. Dr. Turner attacked it in 'Animadversions on Naked Truth,' which led to a defence of it from the pen of Andrew Marvell, under the title of 'Mr. Smirke; or, the Divine in Mode.' 'Lex Talionis; or, the Author of Naked Truth stripped Naked,' was the production of Philip Fell, one of the fellows of Eton College. 'A modest Survey of the most con-

of the above works, he defends the reasonableness of transubstantiation, the most unreasonable of all impositions; and in the other, his object is to prove, that the Conformists were men of no conscience or religion; but that all sincere religion was with the Papists and Puritans: thus endeavouring to flatter the latter, as if the two parties were equally influenced by conscientious principles. Baxter effectually exposed both his productions; but though he did this, and afterwards became acquainted with the author, he never could get him to reply.

In 1679, he published a treatise, which may be regarded as the continuation of his controversy with Johnson, 'Which is the True Church, the whole Christian World as headed by Christ, or the Pope and his subjects?' 4to. This he considered a full answer to his antagonist, who wisely allowed the controversy to drop.

Among the high-church party, whom Baxter considered inclined to Popery, were Mr. Henry Dodwell and Dr. Sherlock. With the former he had entered into a very long personal correspondence; and from the latter, as has been stated in another place, he received very shameful treatment. Dodwell was a learned and amiable man, who held principles so nearly allied to Popery about the sacraments, ministry, and several other points of religion, as to require very nice discernment to perceive any important difference between him and moderate Roman Catholics. He held that there is no true ministry, church, sacraments, or covenant right to pardon and salvation, but through a ministry ordained by bishops, in regular and uninterrupted succession from the apostles. In his large book, entitled 'Separation of Churches from the Episcopal Government, as practised by the present Nonconformists, proved Schismatical,' 1679, 4to, he endeavours to establish these sentiments, and to fix the guilt of schism, and hence, on his principles, exclusion from salvation, upon the Nonconformists, and by implication on the reformed churches. He was greatly indignant

siderable Things in Naked Truth,' was ascribed to Bishop Burnet. 'A Second Part of Naked Truth' was published in 1681, in folio, by Edmund Hickeringhill, of Colchester, a sort of imitation of the first. A third and fourth parts were written by other pens. These led to 'The Catholic Naked Truth' of Hutchinson; to 'The Naked Popery' of Baxter; and to 'Naked Truth needs no Shift,' by William Penn, the Quaker. So much for the influence of a title in producing imitation on a subject to which all parties lay claim, and which it is so easy to accommodate to the purpose of all! A more modest title, however, might have been found by grave bishops, and less greedily imitated by solemn Quakers and stern Presbyterians.

at Baxter's insinuations of his Popish leanings, in the third part of his book on 'Universal Concord,' where Baxter comments severely on his views of schism. "There is lately," he says, "come out of Ireland, a young ordained student of Trinity College, Dublin, to propagate this and such-like doctrines in London. To which end he hath lately written a large and wordy volume, as if it were only against the Nonconformists; which being new, and the most audacious and confident attempt that ever I knew made against the reformed churches by one that saith himself he is no Papist, and being the most elaborate enforcement of the Papists' grand argument, on which of late they build their cause, I think it needful not to pass it by."[q]

Dodwell's offence at being thus classed with Papists, induced Baxter, at last, to publish a correspondence which had formerly taken place between them, in 'An Answer to Mr. Dodwell, confuting an Universal Human Church Supremacy, Aristocratical and Monarchical, as Church Tyranny and Popery.' 1681. 4to. With this he conjoined, 'An Account of his Dissent from Dr. Sherlock, his Doctrine, Accusations, and Argumentation.' With this he also unites his dissent from the French, from Bishop Gunning, and his chaplain, Dr. Saywell, Mr. Thorndike, Bishop Bramhall, Bishop Sparrow, &c.

Dodwell replied to Baxter's 'Pretended Confutation of his former work; with Three Letters formerly written to him, by Mr. Baxter, in 1673, concerning the Possibility of Discipline under a Diocesan Government.' 1681. To which Baxter rejoined, in his 'Answer to Mr. Dodwell's Letter, calling for more Answers.' 1682. 4to. He calls Dodwell's system, "Leviathan; or, Absolute Destructive Prelacy, the son of Abaddon, Apollyon, and not of Jesus Christ."

To enter minutely into the subject of these volumes now, would answer no valuable purpose. It is partly personal, partly relating to the Nonconformist controversy, and partly to those

[q] 'Universal Concord,' part iii. p. 74. Archbishop Tillotson said of Dodwell and Baxter, "that they were much alike in their tempers and opinions in one respect, though they were widely opposed to each other in their tenets; both of them loved to abound in their own sense; could by no means be brought off their own apprehensions and thoughts, but would have them to be the rule and standard for all other men."—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, p. 401. The Life of Dodwell, by Brokesby, gives some account of his controversy with Baxter, and affords a singular illustration of the extent to which a man may possess learning without judgment, and piety without discernment. He had the literature of a Scaliger in the head of a child. He protested, however, against being considered a friend to Popery.

popish views which were held by the class of persons referred to. There is no proper halting place between high-church principles and those of Rome. A system identifying man's authority with God's, laying claim to apostolic authority, and connecting God's salvation with the ministry of man, modified in whatever way, is essentially popish and anti-Christian in its character and claims. The parties holding it may be more or less entitled to respect as men of learning or of piety, but resistance of their doctrines is binding on all who value the principles of our common Protestantism and our common Christianity.[r]

Of a similar nature to the works just mentioned, is another production of our indefatigable author, 'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction, which would be to England its Perjury, Church ruin, and Slavery.' 1691. 8vo. This work, though much of it had been written long before, was not published, as appears from its date, till near the end of his life. He dedicates it to his 'reverend and desired friend,' Dr. John Tillotson, then dean of St. Paul's, whom he earnestly entreats to present it to the next convocation, to induce it, if possible, to make a public renunciation of a foreign jurisdiction, and to discountenance the books which were written in its favour. It is not probable that Tillotson complied with this request. Some of the historical information contained in the work, of the attempts which had been made, at various times, to bring England under the jurisdiction of Rome, is curious, and clearly shows that the fears and jealousies of Baxter and his friends, were not without cause. It may be considered as Baxter's final answer to Peirce, Heylin, Bramhall, Hammond, Sparrow, Parker, Dodwell, Thorndike, Sherlock, &c., and furnishes a key to many of the differences, both civil and religious, which had occurred in the kingdom. There is one chapter where he gives a summary view of the attempts to introduce, at least, a species of episcopal Popery and arbitrary government into this country, from the time of Elizabeth, of the successful resistance it experienced, and of the final result; which I should have been glad to quote, had my limits permitted. It begins at page 332.

'The Protestant Religion Truly Stated and Justified,' is a

[r] Much of the correspondence between Dodwell and Baxter was friendly, and a great deal still remains unpublished. There is one letter from Dodwell to Baxter still preserved among the MSS. of the latter, in twenty closely-written folio pages, full of the learning for which Dodwell was distinguished.

posthumous publication, which appeared shortly after his death, with a preface by Dr. Williams and Mr. Sylvester, though the work had been given to the printer by Baxter himself finished, before they saw it. This may be regarded as Baxter's legacy on the subject of Popery. It is a small 12mo volume; but contains, in fifty-two short sections, a summary of the whole controversy, in answer to a work which had appeared a short time before his death, entitled 'The Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel.' At the conclusion there is a singular prayer, which I quote, as probably the last Baxter wrote for the press.

"From the serpent's seed, and his deceiving subtle lies; from Cain and his successors, and the malignant, blood-thirsty enemies of Abel's faithful acceptable worship; from such a worldly-and-fleshly sacred generation as take gain for godliness, make their worldly carnal interest the standard of their religion, and their proud domination to pass for the kingdom of Christ; from an usurping vice-Christ, whose ambition is so boundless, as to extend to the prophetical, priestly, and kingly headship, over all the earth, even to the antipodes, and to that which is proper to God himself, and our Redeemer; from a leprous sect, which condemneth the far greatest part of all Christ's church on earth, and separateth from them, calling itself the whole and only church; from that church which decreeth destruction, to all that renounce not all human sense, by believing that bread is not bread, nor that wine is wine, but Christ's very flesh and blood, who now hath properly no flesh and blood, but a spiritual body—that decreeth the excommunication, deposition, and damnation, of all princes who will not exterminate all such, and absolveth their subjects from their oaths of allegiance; from that beast whose mark is *per*, *per*jury, *per*fidiousness, and *per*secution, and that thinketh it doeth God acceptable service, by killing his servants, or tormenting them; from that religion which feedeth on Christ's flesh, by sacrificing those that he calleth his flesh and bones; from the infernal dragon, the father of lies, malice, and murder, and all his ministers and kingdom of darkness—Good Lord make haste to deliver thy flock, confirm their faith, hope, patience; and their joyful desire of the great, true, final, glorious deliverance. Amen, Amen, Amen!"

I have compressed within as narrow limits as possible the account of Baxter's writings on the Popish controversy; yet the

reader will perceive even from this imperfect review, how deeply he entered into the subject. He left no one point in the extensive field it embraces untouched; and has supplied among his various works a complete library on Popery. Much extraneous matter is indeed to be found, and many topics are laboured with tiresome prolixity; but this would not be felt at the time they were written so much as now. The subject was then deeply interesting; the fates of religion and of the kingdom trembled on the success or failure of the opposition to the Roman faith; so that all who felt for the happiness of men, and the liberty of their country, would read with avidity whatever was written in their defence.

It required no small measure of courage to occupy a prominent place on the Protestant side of this controversy, especially during the latter years of Charles II. and the reign of James. The principles of the court, and the leanings of the high-church clergy, were all in favour of Rome; so that every man who opposed it, was marked as an enemy, and would certainly have been selected as a victim on the re-establishment of papal authority in England. Such a foe as Baxter, however, was not to be deterred by the apprehension of future danger. He had fully counted the cost when he entered the field; and should he have fallen in it while fighting in his Master's cause, he would have regarded it as a distinguished honour.

The writings of Baxter alone, show how unjust is the reproach that has sometimes been thrown on Protestant dissenters; that when the interests of Protestantism were exposed to imminent danger, they stood aloof, allowing the champions of the church of England to fight all its battles. The leading Nonconformists all took part in this controversy with Rome, as far as could be expected from men in their circumstances. But it would be unreasonable to look for the same efforts from persons deprived of their means of living, often separated from books, destitute of the means of procuring them, as from persons who were in possession of the dignified leisure and profusion of assistance, afforded by a wealthy establishment. But even under all these disadvantages, none of the dignified clergy wrote so voluminously, and few of them wrote so well on this subject, as Richard Baxter.

CHAPTER IX.

WORKS ON ANTINOMIANISM.

The Nature of Antinomianism—Its Appearance at the Reformation—Originated in Popery—Origin in England—The Sentiments of Crisp—Baxter's early Hostility to it—The chief Subject of his 'Confession of Faith'—Dr. Fowler—Baxter's 'Holiness, the Design of Christianity'—'Appeal to the Light'—'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness'—Publication of Crisp's Works—Controversy which ensued—Baxter's 'Scripture Gospel Defended'—The Influence of his Writings and Preaching on Antinomianism—Leading Errors of the System.

AN inspired apostle, speaking of the law of God, declares that "it is holy, just, and good." It is a manifestation of the moral purity of the divine character, a statement of the relations which subsist between God and his creatures, with a view of the equitable claims to homage and obedience which those relations imply. While its every requirement breathes the perfect benevolence of its Author, the whole tends to promote the happiness of those who obey it.

Antinomianism is enmity to this law; hatred of its purity, opposition to its justice, or suspicion of its benevolence. In this naked form of the matter, it is scarcely probable that there is under the profession of religion, a single Antinomian in the world. The sanity of that individual would be justly questionable who should maintain principles so incompatible with the common sense of mankind, and obviously subversive of the moral order of the universe.

The fact, however, is undoubted, that many persons have adopted views of the religion of Christ which virtually imply a renunciation of regard to the divine law, and tend to the entire subversion of its authority. If in their own practice there is not a violation of its precepts, they are careful it should be understood that their conduct is not indebted to the law for

regulation or purity, and that they deny its claims to any authority over them. They assert the freedom of believers in Christ, from the canon as well as from the curse of the law; and that if they do what is required, it is not because it is there enjoined, or because there is any longer danger of its penalty, but because grace secures provision for holiness, and makes the believer complete in Christ.

These views are alleged to be essential to the glory of the Gospel, to exalt the grace of Christ, and to be essentially necessary to Christian peace and comfort. Other sentiments are proscribed as legal, or anti-evangelical, expressive of low views of the Saviour, indicative of a state of bondage and servility of spirit, and inconsistent with Christian confidence and liberty. The parties are thus at issue on first principles. They occupy no common ground. The Scriptures are in vain appealed to, a large portion of them being virtually abrogated, and a system of interpretation adopted setting at defiance all rules, and destructive of all enlightened deductions.

It is worthy of attention that sentiments of the above description were associated at an early period with the Protestant Reformation. Agricola, one of the friends and coadjutors of Luther, publicly avowed opinions respecting the law, which Luther found it necessary to resist and expose. He perceived the tendency of such views, not only to bring reproach on the principles of the Reformation, but to open the flood-gates of impiety, and subvert the grace of Christ itself; which his vain, unsteady, and ill-taught associate, pretended greatly to honour. The zeal and enlightened efforts of Luther, however, though they counteracted, could not altogether eradicate the evil principles which were then disseminated, and in some quarters carried to the utmost excess of riot and profligacy.

To account for this, it is not sufficient to refer to the depravity of human nature, and a tendency to abuse the best things. Reference to the doctrines of the papal church, and to the prodigious revolution that took place in the minds of men, on the most important subjects, when the light of truth first burst in upon them, will enable us to solve in a satisfactory manner an apparently difficult problem, and to throw the disgrace of Antinomianism,—the opprobrium of Protestantism, on Popery itself.

Under that horrid system of delusion and unrighteousness, salvation is regarded as almost exclusively a human transaction, in which the Deity has a remote concern, but which must be, in a great measure, effected by man for himself, or in co-operation with his fellow mortals. The doctrines of the merit of good works, of the efficacy of penance, of the sacrifice of the mass offered by priestly hands, of the intercession of saints, and of the purification of purgatory, all tended to create the idea that redemption from sin and from wrath, with the cure of all the evils of our nature, belongs to man himself, and that the Almighty interferes in it only as he is acted upon by his creatures. On God's part no room is left for the exercise of grace; all is obtained as matter of rightful claim, or extorted by a system of barter and importunity. On the part of man, while the system seems to bring salvation within his own power, it really deprives him of every satisfactory hope of obtaining it. It either puffs him up with pride and self-conceit, derived from erroneous notions of his own virtues, or depresses him with despair of accomplishing his object by his own feeble and unaided efforts. The law (but the law degraded, obscured, and perverted) is the only part of religion recognised by Popery.

The German Reformer discovered at an early period of his career this grand flaw, the *origo mali*, of the whole system, or mystery of iniquity. It had put God out of his own place in the administration of the world; had seated a usurper on his throne, and made man himself that usurper. In the economy of redemption, Luther discovered that God, and not the creature, is the main worker; that grace, not equity, is the great principle of the divine conduct towards fallen creatures; that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified before God: and hence, that salvation by faith, not by works, is the grand subject of Christianity. The doctrine of gratuitous justification, he, therefore, contended for as the leading truth of the Gospel. As the ground of hope, he opposed it to every system of self-righteousness, to all supposed conformity to God's own law, and to every accommodation of that law to human imperfection. He regarded salvation as that which could not be purchased by human merit, or secured as the reward of any service or suffering of man.

So much importance did Luther attach to this doctrine, that he not only viewed it as the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiæ;* he himself looked at the law with something like

suspicion of its being unfriendly to the grace of Christ. Jealousy for the honour of the main principle of his system, led him frequently to employ language about the law, unguarded and dangerous in its tendency; and to speak both of James and his epistle, as if he considered them inimical to his sentiments. Notwithstanding this, the general views of Luther were too enlightened and scriptural to consist with any important or practical error. He took care to obviate the inferences men might draw from some of his statements, by explanations, or caveats, that sufficiently mark the limits within which they must be understood.

Considering the number who adopted the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, it would have been strange had they all made a judicious use of it. Unfortunately, some of those who received it with apparent joy, could see no other doctrine in the Bible. Convinced of the hopelessness of justification by the law; delivered from its bondage and terror, as well as from the bondage of the superinduced yoke of ceremonies, under which they had long groaned; they could think of nothing but of grace, liberty, and confidence. From a system which had almost excluded God from any connexion with man's salvation, they passed to one which seemed to leave nothing for man but to contemplate and admire. Beholding a perfect righteousness by which freedom from guilt is secured to the believer, entirely independent of himself, they forgot that there is a righteousness of a personal character indispensable to the enjoyment of God, which cannot be performed by proxy, or obtained by substitution. From hearing only the voice of a task master, who goaded them on by the terror of punishment, they contracted a dislike to the very language of precept, and experienced a feeling of horror at the idea of punishment, or its threatening. From considering salvation as what must be accomplished entirely by man and in him, they adopted a view of it which divests it of all connexion with his personal character and feelings. In their minds, it became the solution of a moral problem, rather than a moral cure; a sentiment to delight the understanding, more than a medicine to relieve the heart.

Such appears to me to have been the process of the early Protestant Antinomianism. In proportion to the strength of passion, and the weakness of understanding, belonging to those who received the reformed faith, these imperfect and

erroneous views were found to prevail; till, in many cases, the worst abominations of Popery were grafted on a Protestant creed.

To the operation of causes somewhat similar, the Antinomianism of modern times may frequently be ascribed. It is often the revulsion from a previous state of self-righteousness and formality to such a professed admiration of grace, as makes the party either seem to be indifferent to the obligations and claims of morality, or to teach what tends to their utter subversion. Dr. Crisp, the founder of English Antinomianism, is an illustration of this. He was originally a low Arminian, who held the merit of good works, and looked for salvation more from his own doings, than from the work and grace of a Redeemer. Having been led to see the evil and folly of these sentiments, and being a man of a weak and confused mind, he not only abandoned the errors of his former course, but at once passed to the opposite extreme of that course, and taught the grossest errors in the very grossest form. Yet the man was neither licentious himself, nor disposed to promote licentiousness in others. His professed object was to exalt the Saviour, even when he employed language most degrading to his character.

What can be more injurious to all right conceptions of God's moral administration, and of what is due to the adorable Redeemer, than the following representation? though after all it is nothing more than a mistaken mode of representing the doctrine of imputation. Crisp confounds a transfer of consequences with a commutation of persons, and is thus guilty of the absurdity of converting Christ into a sinner. "It is iniquity itself," he says, "as well as the punishment of iniquity, that the Lord laid upon Christ; he bare the sins of men, as well as he was wounded for their sins. The Lord hath laid this iniquity on him; he makes a real transaction; Christ stands as very a sinner in God's eyes as the reprobate, though not as the actor of these transgressions; yet as he was the surety, the debt became as really his as it was the principals' before it became the surety's."[s]

On the same absurd plan he reasons respecting God's views of the sins of his people before they believe, confounding all our notions of good and evil. "The Lord hath no more to lay to the charge of an elect person, yet in the height of iniquity, and in the excess of riot, and committing all the abominations that can be committed—I say even then, when an elect person

[s] Works, vol. ii. pp. 261, 262.

runs such a course, the Lord hath no more to lay to that person's charge, than God hath to lay to the charge of a believer; nay, God hath no more to lay to the charge of such a person, than he hath to lay to the charge of a saint triumphant in glory."[t]

By the same effectual process he gets rid of all their sins after they do believe. "Give me a believer that hath set his footing truly in Christ; and he blasphemes Christ, that dares serve a writ of damnation upon that person. Suppose a believer overtaken in a gross sin, it is a desperate thing in any man so much as to serve a writ of damnation upon this believer; it is absolutely to frustrate and make void the Mediatorship and Saviourship of Christ, to say any believer, though he be fallen by infirmity, is in the estate of damnation. And I say unto thee thyself, whoever thou art, thou that art ready to charge damnation upon thyself, when thou art overtaken, thou dost the greatest injury to the Lord Jesus Christ that can be, for in it thou directly overthrowest the fulness of the grace of Christ, and the fulness of the satisfaction of Christ to the Father."[u]

He maintains that the law has nothing to do with the transgressions of such persons, even of the grossest kind, and thus prepares an opiate for the utmost profligacy, under the Christian name. "Suppose a member of Christ, a freeman of Christ, should happen to fall, not only by a failing or slip, but also by a gross failing, a heavy failing, nay, a scandalous falling into sin; Christ making a person free, doth disannul, frustrate, and make void, every curse and sentence that is in the law, against such a transgressor; that this member of Christ is no more under the curse when he hath transgressed, than he was before he transgressed. This I say, Christ hath conveyed him beyond the reach of the curse; it concerns him no more than if he had not transgressed. Therefore, let me tell you in a word, if ye be free men of Christ, you may esteem all the curses of the law, as no more concerning you, than the laws of England do concern Spain, or the laws of Turkey an Englishman, with whom they have nothing to do. I do not say the law is absolutely abolished, but it is abolished in respect of the curse of it; to every person that is a freeman of Christ. So, though such a man do sin, the law hath no more to say to him, than if he had not sinned."[x]

In consistency with these principles, he maintains that sanctification, though connected with justification, is no part of the

[t] Works, vol. ii. p. 272. [u] Ibid. vol. i. p. 36. [x] Ibid. p. 243—245.

believer's way to heaven; and that inherent qualifications, or the state of the character, are doubtful evidences of the Christian's hope. In short, he confounds the divine eternal purpose of mercy with its actual application; compassion for the sins of men, with complacency in the sinner himself; the renunciation of the law as the principle of justification, with its abolition as an eternal rule of righteousness; Christ with the believer, and the believer with Christ. All this is done with a great show of piety, and high-sounding pretensions to extraordinary zeal for the honour of the Saviour.

His writings abound with the ultraism of grace, and a lusciousness in speaking about it, which is often ludicrous and disgusting. Of which let the following serve as a specimen: "Christ is a way as the cellars of wine are unto drunkards, that are never better than when they are at their cups; and therefore no place like the cellar, where is fulness of wine, always to be tippling and drinking: I say, Christ is such a way, and let me not be offensive to say so, for the church speaks in the same language (Canticles ii. 4, 5), 'He brought me (saith she) into his wine cellar: stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.' Beloved, Christ hath such variety of delicates served in continually, and such sweetness in this variety, that the soul is no longer satisfied than it is with Christ. Here is not staying with cups, much less with half cups, but staying with whole flagons; there is a kind of inebriating, whereby Christ doth, in a spiritual sense, make the believers that keep him company spiritually drunk, he overcomes them with his wine."[7]

Truly, the whole of this monstrous representation seems more like the sportings of a reveller than the production of Christian intelligence and sobriety. I have entered into this detail, to enable the reader to understand the kind of Antinomianism against which Baxter waged determined war. Dr. Crisp died in 1643. He published nothing during his lifetime; but shortly after his death three volumes of sermons, from which the above extracts are taken, were published by some of his admirers. He appears to have had a number of followers: several persons in the ministry also imbibed and taught his sentiments; and the excitement of the civil wars matured and expanded every form of heresy and extravagance which happened to fall or be thrown on the fertile soil of England.

[7] Vol. i. pp. 103, 104.

"In my Confession," says Baxter, "I opened the whole doctrine of Antinomianism which I opposed; and I brought the testimonies of abundance of our divines, who gave as much to other acts, besides faith in justification, as I. I opened the weakness of Dr. Owen's reasonings for justification before faith, in his former answer to me. To which he wrote an answer, annexing it to his confutation of Biddle and the Cracovian catechism, to intimate that I belonged to that party, so that I thought it unfit to make any reply to it.

"But for all the writings and wrath of men which were provoked against me, I must here record my thanks to God for the success of my controversial writings against the Antinomians. When I was in the army, it was the predominant infection. The books of Dr. Crisp, Paul Hobson, Saltmarsh, Cradock, and abundance such-like, were the writings most applauded; and he was thought no spiritual Christian, but a legalist, that savoured not of Antinomianism, which was sugared with the title of free grace. Others were thought to preach the law, and not to preach Christ: and I confess the darkness of many preachers, in the mysteries of the Gospel, and our common neglect of studying and preaching grace, and gratitude, and love, did give occasion to the prevalency of this sect, which God, no doubt, permitted for our good to renew our apprehension of those evangelical graces and duties which we barely acknowledged, and in our practice almost overlooked. But this sect that then so much prevailed, became so suddenly almost extinct, that now they little appear, and make no noise at all, nor have done these many years. In which effect, those ungrateful controversial writings of my own have had so much hand, as obligeth me to very much thankfulness to God."[s]

I have already noticed Baxter's 'Aphorisms,' 'Apology,' and 'Confession of Faith,' in treating of his doctrinal writings; but as they have all, especially the last, connexion with the Antinomian controversy, it is necessary to advert to some of them again. In his 'Confession,' he goes most fully into the subject, and shows that he had studied it most profoundly. His reference to Owen, in the passage of his Life just quoted, is painful, as are all his references to that eminent man. Owen was not always correct in his phraseology on doctrinal subjects; but it is quite unnecessary to say he was neither an Antinomian, nor a high Calvinist in the modern

[s] Life, part i. p. 3.

sense of that expression. Baxter was prejudiced at his name, and therefore looked at all his writings with jealousy and dislike. The other persons to whom he refers were of different classes. Saltmarsh was a mystic and a fanatic, who sported the wildest and most incoherent rhapsodies.[z] Hobson was a military captain, and a Baptist preacher. Cradock, and Vavasor Powell, whom also Baxter elsewhere represents as an Antinomian, were both, I believe, very excellent and laborious preachers in Wales, who had nothing beyond a tincture of high Calvinism in their sentiments.

After noticing what he considered the tendency of the opinions he opposes, and what he knew of their actual effects, he presents, in the following admirable passage, a view of his own feelings and resolutions, in reference to the controversy.

"These reasons having excited my zeal against this sect, above many others, I have accordingly judged it my duty to bend myself against them in all my writings, especially when I saw how greedily multitudes of poor souls did take the bait, and how exceedingly the writings and preachings of Saltmarsh and many of his fellows did take with them. Upon this, I perceive the men that, in any measure, go that way, are engaged against me; and how to appease them I know not. I would as willingly know the truth as some of them, if I could. Sure I am I have as much reason. My soul should be as precious to me. Christ should be as much valued; grace should be as much magnified; self should be as much denied. I am as deeply beholden to Christ and free grace as most poor sinners in the world: and should I vilify or wrong the form an opinion, or I know not what! Every man that is drawn from Christ is drawn by some contrary prevailing interest. What interest should draw me to think meanly of my Saviour or his free grace? For free remission alone, without any condition, or an eternal justification, I do not perceive but that my very carnal part would fain have it to be true. I have flesh as well

[z] Of Saltmarsh, Crandon, who supported his principles, and attacked Baxter, says, "I have been told by some of his godly acquaintance, that the man had a natural impotency, or craziness in his brain. And the whirlwind of imaginations wherewith he was carried to a hasty taking up of opinions, and no less hurling away of them again; the much of the top, and the little of the bottom, of wit; the flashes of nimbleness, and the want of solidity and depth in his writings; his inconsistency with himself, with others, with the Scriptures; his extreme mutability, and wandering from tropic to tropic, without settledness anywhere, in great measure prove the report to be true."—*Crandon against Baxter's Aphorisms*, p. 138.

as they; and if I am able to discern the pleadings or inclinations of that flesh, it runs their way, in contradiction to the spirit. The Lord knows I have as little reason to extol my own righteousness, or place my confidence in works and merits, as other men have. I must truly say, the Lord holdeth my sins much more before mine eyes, than my good works. The one are mountains to me, the other I can scarce tell whether I may own, in propriety, without many cautions and limitations. I have therefore no carnal interests of my own that I can possibly discover, to lead me against the way of these men, or engage me to contend against them. Yet I am not able to forbear. I confess I am an irreconcilable enemy to their doctrines, and so let them take me. I had as lief tell them so as hide it. The more I pray God to illuminate me in these things, the more I am animated against them. The more I search after the truth in my studies, the more I dislike them; the more I read their own books, the more do I see the vanity of their conceits: but, above all, when I do but open the Bible, I can seldom meet with a leaf that is not against them."*

The most valuable part of the Confession is the statement in parallel columns, of the doctrines of Antinomianism and of Popery, in the two extremes, with what Baxter regarded as the truth placed between them. It is drawn up with great care, and is only necessary to be perused to satisfy the reader on which side the truth really lies. Not that I approve of all his own representations, they are generally too verbose, often too technical, and sometimes erroneous. But, on the whole, they contain a valuable statement of important truth, and clearly prove that Baxter was not only orthodox, but strictly evangelical. He is chiefly objectionable when he speaks of the interest of repentance and good works in our justification, as well as faith. His phraseology is unscriptural, and calculated to mislead; but when he comes to explain it, it means nothing more than that men cannot come to the kingdom of heaven without repentance and obedience, which are always the accompaniments of genuine faith.

The next performance of Baxter, that has reference to this controversy, is a small tract, which I shall introduce to the reader by the following extract from his Life.

"Dr. Edward Fowler, a very ingenious, sober Conformist,

* Confession, pp. 3, 4.

wrote two books, one, 'An Apology for the Latitudinarians,' as they were then called; the other entitled, 'Holiness the Design of Christianity,' in which he sometimes put in the word only which gave offence, and the book seemed to some to have a scandalous design to obscure the glory of free justification, under pretence of extolling holiness as the only design of man's redemption. This occasioned a few sheets of mine on the said book and question, for reconciliation, and clearing up of the point; which, when Mr. Fowler saw, he wrote to tell me that he was of my judgment, only he had delivered that more generally which I opened more particularly; and that the word was only hyperbolically spoken, as I had said. But he spake feelingly against those quarrelsome men that are readier to censure than to understand. I returned him some advice, to take heed lest their weakness and censoriousness should make him too angry and impatient with religious people, as the prelates are; and so to run into greater sin than theirs, by favouring a looser party because they are less censorious. To which he returned me so ingenuous and hearty thanks, for as great kindness as ever was showed him; which told me that free and friendly counsel to wise and good men is not lost." [b]

The treatise of Dr. Fowler, who was afterward bishop of Gloucester, is on an important subject, and it is managed, on the whole, with considerable ability. The full title of it is, 'The Design of Christianity; or, a plain demonstration and improvement of this proposition, That the enduing men with inward, real righteousness, or true holiness, was the ultimate end of our Saviour's coming into the world, and is the great intendment of the blessed Gospel.' 1671. 8vo.

The work of Fowler had no intentional reference to the Antinomian controversy, though the subject belongs to the very essence of it; and the treatise contains much that could be turned to profitable account in that discussion. Baxter's tract was not designed as an answer to, but rather as a corroboration of Fowler's book; and to point out its bearing in this controversy. It is entitled, 'How far Holiness is the Design of Christianity; where the nature of holiness and morality is opened, and the doctrine of justification, imputation of sin, and righteousness, partly cleared, and vindicated from abuse. In certain propositions returned to an unknown person, referring to Mr. Fowler's treatise on this subject.' 1671. 4to. There is

[b] Life, part iii. p. 85.

nothing in the body of the pamphlet which requires particular notice; but the conclusion of it is worthy of being quoted.

"Undoubtedly, holiness is the life and beauty of the soul. The spirit of holiness is Christ's agent to do his work in us, and our pledge, and earnest, and first fruits of heaven; it is Christ's work, and subordinately comes to cleanse us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Christ, the Spirit, the Word, the ministry, mercies, afflictions, and all things, are to bring home our hearts to God, and to work together for our good, by making us partakers of his holiness. Our holiness is our love of God, who is most holy; and our love of God, and reception of his love, are our heaven and everlasting happiness; where, having no more sin to be forgiven, but being presented without spot or wrinkle to God, we shall for ever both magnify the Lamb that hath redeemed us and washed us from all our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests to God; and shall also, with all the holy society, sing, Holy, holy, holy, to the blessed Jehovah, who is, and was, and is to come, to whom all the heavenly host shall give this special part of praise for ever." [c]

A sermon preached by Baxter at the Pinner's Hall Tuesday morning lecture, contained some remarks on the Antinomians, or those whom he considered such, which gave great offence. This was rather frequently the case with regard to him while preaching in London. His dislike to the Independents, whom he was fond of representing as Antinomians, led him to use language that was considered to convey personal reflections on some of their most approved ministers, which, as might have been expected, was resented by their friends. The consequence of this kind of bickering was the separation of the two parties in that joint lecture. In the following paragraph of his Life, speaking of the transactions of the year 1674, he says:

"Having preached at Pinner's Hall for love and peace, divers false reports went current among the Separatists, and from them to other Nonconformists, that I preached against the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and for justification by our own righteousness, and that the Papists and Protestants differ but in words, &c. So that I was constrained to publish the truth of the case in a sheet of paper, called 'An Appeal to the Light,' which, though it evinced the falsehoods of their reports, and no one man did ever after justify them that ever I could hear of,

[c] 'Holiness, the Design of Christianity,' pp. 21, 22.

yet did they persevere in their general accusation, and I had letters from several counties stating that the London accusers had written to them, that I had, both in the sermon and in that paper called 'An Appeal to the Light,' done more to strengthen Popery, than ever was done by any Papists. This was the reward of all my labours, from the separating Independents." [d]

Whether by an Independent or not, I cannot tell, but this appeal of Baxter's was answered immediately in a very smart and brief pamphlet: 'Animadversions on a sheet of Mr. Baxter's, entitled, 'An Appeal to the Light;' for the further Caution of his Credulous Readers.' Oxford. 1675. 4to. The author of this tract shows that Baxter had roundly charged persons with Antinomianism, to whom it did not belong; and that his own explanations of the subject of justification, were by no means satisfactory. Both these positions, it must be acknowledged, are correct. Many of those of whom he spoke, were decided Calvinists, high rather than moderate; but who were grossly misrepresented when classed among Antinomians. Such men as Owen, Tully, Bagshaw, Bunyan, ought not to have been ranked with Saltmarsh, Hobson, and others of that stamp. Baxter often injured his own cause by his injudicious manner of advocating it. Though sometimes he states the doctrine of justification very well, in general he beclouds it with his distinctions and definitions; so that no one who understands it will prefer his explanations of this doctrine to those of the writers whom he opposes.

In the collection of pieces which Baxter published in 1676, under the general title of 'A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' to which reference has already been made in the chapter on his doctrinal works, Antinomianism is the chief object of his attention. The first book, which treats of imputed righteousness, and the reply to Dr. Tully's letter, enter very fully into the history and merits of the controversy. To the discussion with Tully, or the debate in which that writer had long engaged with Bull, it is unnecessary further to advert in this place. Those who wish to enter largely into the subject must consult Nelson's 'Life of Bishop Bull,' where it is stated with great fairness and candour. In Baxter's treatise, the chief things of importance are his historical view of the progress of the Antinomian controversy, with the account of his own connexion with it; and a few passages, in which he very

[d] Life, part iii. p. 154.

accurately explains the nature of that connexion which subsists between Christ and his people, in virtue of which they enjoy the benefits of his redemption. In some of these paragraphs he states the doctrine of imputation in such a way as must commend itself to every enlightened mind, and so as completely exposes the absurdity of imputed sanctification. With no less propriety he states the moral or analogical sense, in which the Scriptures speak of Christ's righteousness as the property of his people. Had he and others always spoken in the intelligible and scriptural manner, on this important subject, which is done in some parts of this volume, how much good might have been effected, and what a quantity of useless debate and altercation would have been prevented! The unnatural strain and construction which have been put on the language of Scripture, on several points in this controversy, have created great confusion, and have been attended with many injurious consequences. The ignorance and weakness of some occasion misconceptions of Scripture phraseology, which the technical language and wire-drawn distinctions of men of superior minds often tend to increase rather than to remove.

Almost at the very close of his life, and after he judged Antinomianism in a great measure to have been destroyed, Baxter was roused to the re-consideration of the subject, in consequence of the re-publication of Dr. Crisp's works, by his son, Samuel Crisp. To this edition was prefixed a document, subscribed with twelve names of London dissenting ministers, among whom were Messrs. Howe, Griffiths, Cockain, Chauncy, Alsop, and Mather. Considering the nature of Crisp's sentiments, and the outrageous language which he employs in his sermons, it is deeply to be regretted that such men had any thing to do with the publication. They do not, however, recommend or approve the sentiments, but declare their belief that the discourses as published, with additions, by his son, really were Dr. Crisp's.

This publication very nearly occasioned a controversy between Baxter and Howe, who was one of the subscribers of the attestation. Baxter was exceedingly displeased that the doctrines of Crisp should appear, even in the slightest degree, to be countenanced by such persons. He drew up a paper, therefore, with some warmth, against a practice which he thought had a very

pernicious tendency. Mr. Howe, waiting on him, prevailed with him to stop it before it was published and dispersed, upon his promising to prefix a declaration, with reference to the names before Dr. Crisp's sermons, (which declaration, also, should have several names to it,) to a book of Mr. Flavel's, then going to press, entitled, 'A Blow at the Root; or, the Causes and Cure of Mental Errors.' This was accordingly done; yet many remained dissatisfied.*

Though this prevented a personal discussion with Howe, it did not keep Baxter from engaging in the general controversy. In the preface by Samuel Crisp, the editor, Baxter considered himself attacked, though he was not named, and therefore felt that he was called once more to contend for the faith delivered to the saints. He was thus led to publish 'The Scripture Gospel Defended, and Christ, Grace, and Free Justification Vindicated, against the Libertines.' 1690. 8vo. This work is divided into two books. The first is, 'A Breviate of Fifty Controversies about Justification.' The second is, 'A Dialogue between an Orthodox Zealot and Reconciling Monitor, written on the Reviving of the Errors, and the Reprinting and Reception, of Dr. Crisp's Writings,' &c. In this second book, he describes a hundred of their errors. He then endeavours to moderate men's censure of their persons: and, thirdly, assigns reasons for not replying to them more at large.

Baxter saw only the commencement of the controversy respecting Crisp's sentiments, which agitated and consumed the dissenters for more than seven years after he had gone to his rest. He was succeeded by his friend Dr. Williams, who took the lead in the discussion in support of the doctrines of what may be called moderate Calvinism; and who, after incredible exertion, and no small portion of suffering, finally succeeded in clearing the ground of the Antinomians: scarcely any of them being left among the reputed dissenting ministers of the metropolis at the beginning of the last century. The best account of this controversy, both as carried on in the church and among the dissenters, for it was not confined to one party, is given by Nelson, in his 'Life of Bishop Bull,' to which I beg to

* Calamy's Own Life, vol. i. pp. 322, 323. The paper prefixed to Flavel's Treatise is subscribed by seven out of the twelve who had prefixed their names to the former attestation. In this paper they entirely disclaim any intention to approve of Crisp's doctrine, and declare they were merely called to attest the son's integrity as the publisher of his father's manuscripts.

refer the reader who feels interested in its further details. I confine myself to a few additional observations on Baxter's connexion with it.

I do not regard his controversial writings, as having rendered any very essential service in this discussion. He has, indeed, stated himself to be of a different opinion; and it was natural he should think so, considering how much he wrote on the subject. But two things which he did in this controversy greatly impaired his influence. He placed individuals and opinions under the charge of Antinomianism that ought not to have been thus treated. By this means he divided the true friends of that very cause which he espoused, and created additional labour to himself; besides exciting those feelings of personal irritation of which he so frequently complains.

In the next place, his own system of doctrine, in which he spoke so much of terms and conditions, and of the interest of repentance and good works in justification, was not well calculated to soften down the prejudices of the libertines whom he opposed. Many of them had good views of the freeness of grace, so far as that one position goes, and were not to be satisfied with a mode of treating the subject more objectionable than even the stricter Calvinism, to which they objected as not sufficiently high for them. If they mystified justification and imputation in one way, Baxter did it in another; so that the scriptural scholar will probably object to the explanations of both parties; though he will feel convinced that Baxter's views, when stripped of the verbiage with which they are clothed, were much nearer the truth than those of his opponents, and much less calculated to injure the souls of men.

But though his controversial writings effected little, his practical works and preaching effected a great deal in this controversy. In these, without directly entering the lists with Antinomians, and probably without thinking of them, he assailed the strong holds of their system, and demolished them to the ground. A better remedy for any one attached to their mistaken views could not, perhaps, be prescribed than a course of Baxterian reading. If the influence of Baxter's spirit should be imbibed, the cure would be certain.

One of the great evils of the system consists in grossly incorrect notions of the nature of the law of God. From these arise imperfect ideas of human responsibility, with which are

necessarily connected inadequate impressions of guilt, and of the evil nature of sin. On all these subjects Baxter's views were most enlightened; and they were expressed with a power of eloquence scarcely equalled in human writings. He always speaks of the law of God like a man who well understood its spiritual character and its unquestionable claims. He pronounces on its authority, not as a matter *sub judice*, or which admitted of dispute; but which had its evidence in itself, and its answer in every man's conscience. Sin was, in his view, not a thing of speculation, which men required to be convinced of by argument, but matter of fact, not to be denied or explained away by the sinner. He arraigns him before the bar of God; he drags him to Sinai; he pours upon his ear the denunciation of offended Heaven: leaving him no plea to urge, no ground to stand on, without repairing to Calvary and the cross.

If the forte of some preachers and writers be the comforting of the broken-hearted, and that of others the building up of believers, the strength of Baxter lay in convincing men of sin. Man's responsibility for the powers and privileges which he enjoys, is urged by no writer with such fulness and force as it is by him. He had the deepest sense of this responsibility himself, and was thus, as well as by other considerations, induced to place it in the most powerful manner before others. High Calvinism, or Antinomianism, absolutely withers and destroys the consciousness of responsibility. It confounds moral with natural impotency, forgetting that the former is a crime, the latter but a misfortune; and thus treats the man dead in trespasses and sins, as if he were already in his grave. It prophesies smooth things to the sinner going on in his transgressions, and soothes to slumber and the repose of death the souls of such as are at ease in Zion. It assumes that, because men can neither believe, repent, nor pray acceptably, unless aided by the grace of God, it is useless to call upon them to do so. It maintains that the Gospel is only intended for elect sinners, and therefore it ought to be preached to none but such. In defiance, therefore, of the command of God, it refuses to preach the glad tidings of mercy to every sinner. In opposition to Scripture and to every rational consideration, it contends that it is not man's duty to believe the truth of God; justifying the obvious inference, that it is not a sin to reject it. In short, its whole tendency is to produce an impression on the sinner's

mind, that if he is not saved, it is not his fault, but God's; that if he is condemned, it is more for the glory of the divine sovereignty, than as the punishment of his guilt.

I am not acquainted with any direct process of argument by which such persons are likely to be cured. Their judgments are commonly as weak, as their understandings are perverted and obstinate. They reason in a circle, which it is a vain endeavour to break. They dwell on the figurative language of Scripture, which they apply in the most literal sense; refusing to be subject to any laws or canons of interpretation. In such cases, the best mode of proceeding is, perhaps, that which Baxter pursued in his general preaching—to treat such men as sinners labouring under the influence of that deceitful depravity, which assumes this with a thousand other forms, for the destruction of its subject. Baxter contributed greatly to introduce this awakening and powerful style of preaching; and thus did more to prevent and counteract Antinomianism, than by all his controversial writings.

Another fatal error of this system, respects the great design of the Gospel itself. That this should be mistaken, considering the clearness of the discovery to us, and the importance of our understanding that discovery, may appear surprising; but the fact is undoubted. The grand object of the Gospel is the redemption of sinners. That redemption necessarily includes all that belongs to the condition of the lost and ruined party. It finds man guilty, and provides for him pardon: it finds him depraved, or morally diseased, and it provides a cure. It is designed to comprehend his body, soul, and spirit, and to secure their interests for ever. The blood of Christ, the great sacrifice for sin, is made the basis of the proclamation of Heaven's forgiveness to all that believe; and the application of the same blood by which the pardon is secured, by the power of the divine Spirit, is made to cleanse the soul from all its impurity. The grand loss which man has sustained by sin, is the moral image of the Creator. His nature has thus been robbed of its highest glory, and deprived of its chief enjoyment. Mere forgiveness might save from punishment, but could not render the sinner like God, or capable of beholding his resplendent face in righteousness. In order to this, the divine nature must be again restored; God must once more breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, and form him again according to his own likeness in knowledge and in true holiness

It may be said, therefore, with the greatest propriety, that

men are forgiven that they may be sanctified; they are pardoned that they may be renewed. "Holiness," says Baxter, "doubtless is that higher blessing which forgiveness tendeth to, as a means to the end: even that God may have his own again, which was lost, and man may again be nearer and liker to God; fitter to know, love, and honour him, and be happy therein." This conformity to God, is the end of the divine predestination;[f] the end of the divine election;[g] the grand end of the death of Christ;[h] the object of all the injunctions of the word of God;[i] and the leading design of all the discipline of his Providence.[k]

Antinomianism, so far from regarding the moral cure of human nature as the great object and design of the Gospel, does not take it in at all, but as it exists in Christ, and becomes our's by a figure of speech. It regards the grace and the pardon as every thing, the spiritual design or effect as nothing. Hence its opposition to progressive, and its zeal for imputed sanctification; the former is intelligible and tangible, but the latter is a figment of the imagination. Hence its delight in expatiating on the eternity of the divine decrees, which it does not understand, but which serve to amuse and to deceive; and its dislike to all the sober realities of God's present dealings and commands. It exults in the contemplation of a Christ who is a kind of concretion of all the moral attributes of his people, to the overlooking of that Christ who is the Head of all that in heaven and on earth bear his likeness; and while unconscious of possessing it. It boasts in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, while it believes in no saint but one, that is, Jesus, and neglects to persevere. "The dreamer must feel that sin is a substantial ill, in which himself is fatally implicated, not a mere abstraction to be discoursed of; he must learn that the righteous God deals with mankind on terms perfectly adapted to the intellectual and moral conformation of human nature, of which He is the author; and he must know that salvation is a deliverance in which man is an agent, not less than a recipient."[l]

The whole object and aim of Baxter's preaching and practical writings, were to promote holiness as the grand end of religion, and he who proposes another or inferior end of his ministry, aims at something different from the main design of the Gospel of Christ. Baxter sometimes mistook the means of

[f] Rom. viii. 29. [g] Ephes. i. 4. [h] Ibid. v. 25—27.
[i] Heb. xii. 10. [k] 1 Peter i. 15, 16.
[l] 'Natural History of Enthusiasm,' p. 89.

accomplishing his object, and employed measures which not only failed to convince his opponents, and correct the evils of which he complained, but actually exasperated them. But we invariably perceive, both in his controversial and practical writings, the subject which was uppermost in his thoughts and desires. His definitions are sometimes incorrect, his distinctions are often injudicious, and his language frequently captious and provoking; but his own life was blameless and harmless, his character was formed on the ground of Gospel holiness, and his great and increasing anxiety was, to produce in others the enjoyment of the same salvation which he had himself received, and the purifying influence of its glorious hope.[m]

[m] The late Rev. Andrew Fuller was one of the ablest antagonists of Antinomianism in modern times. In 'The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation,' and the Defence of it, and a posthumous treatise on Antinomianism published in his works, beside several other of his pieces, there are some admirable views of the subject. In his Life, by Dr. Ryland, there is a good deal of interesting information respecting the state and progress of High Calvinism during the last century. A very able and important review of Fuller's writings on this, and, indeed, all the subjects which engaged his pen, is given in Morris's 'Memoirs of Fuller,' which I recommend to the reader's attention who wishes to examine this topic at length.

CHAPTER X.

WORKS ON BAPTISM, QUAKERISM, AND MILLENARIANISM.

Introductory Remarks—Controversy with Tombes—'Plain Proof of Infant Baptism'—Answered by Tombes—'More Proofs of Infant Church Membership'—Controversy with Danvers—'Review of the State of Christian Infants'—Controversy with the Quakers—Early Behaviour of the Quakers—'Worcestershire Petition to Parliament'—'Petition Defended'—'Quaker's Catechism'—'Single Sheets' relating to the Quakers—Controversy with Beverley on the Millenium—Account of Beverley—'The Glorious Kingdom of Christ described'—Answered by Beverley—Baxter's 'Reply'—Conclusion.

CONSIDERING the variety of subjects which form strictly, or by implication, the divine revelation of the sacred Scriptures, and the diversity which characterises the modes of thinking and circumstances of men, by which they are more or less influenced in forming their opinions of the will of God, it is not surprising that religious controversies have in every age of the Christian church been very numerous. Sometimes they relate to matters of great importance, and then require to be viewed with that seriousness and care, which are always becoming when such subjects are discussed. At other times they relate to subjects of inferior magnitude, respecting which men of equal integrity and decision of Christian character may differ, without any impeachment of their principles or sincerity. It has often happened, however, that these inferior points have been discussed with a warmth and violence altogether unsuitable, and which have tended to exasperate and to wound, instead of producing reconciliation and healing. Asperity, crimination, and provoking language, have been the bane of religious controversy, and have excited the most powerful prejudices against it on the part of many who might otherwise have been greatly benefited by a calm and enlightened discussion of subjects, respecting which

they are imperfectly informed. Truth, however, has sometimes derived advantage, while the disputers about it have been injured. Light has been extracted by the friction and collision of contending bodies; and after the noise and the smoke have passed way, the conflict has appeared to be not altogether in vain.

The period during which Baxter lived, was distinguished for the intense earnestness with which every religious subject, great and little, was investigated and debated. While the great interests of truth and godliness were not neglected, all that was minute was looked at with microscopic attention, and often magnified beyond its due dimensions and importance. This may, perhaps, be thought applicable to the subjects to which the present chapter is devoted; though some of the topics will be found of considerable interest. They will, at least, enable us to form a more adequate estimate of the times of Baxter, and present us with some of the active and bustling men of the period.

The controversy respecting the subjects and mode of baptism, is one of long standing in the church, and is still, seemingly, as far from being settled as ever. It is not my object at present to enter into the nature of the controversy, or to pronounce on which side the strength of the argument lies, but to give a view of Baxter's writings and efforts in relation to it. His chief antagonist in this debate, was John Tombes, B. D., minister of Bewdley, a man of considerable learning and talents, and one of the most voluminous writers on baptismal controversy which that fruitful subject has furnished. Of the origin of the war between him and Baxter, the latter has left the following account: "Mr. Tombes, who was my neighbour, within two miles, denying infant baptism, and having wrote a book or two against it, was not a little desirous of the propagation of his opinion, and the success of his writings. He thought that I was the chief hinderer, though I never meddled with the point. Whereupon he came constantly to my weekly lecture, waiting for an opportunity to fall upon that controversy in his conference with me; but I studiously avoided it, so that he knew not how to begin. He had so high a conceit of his writings, that he thought them unanswerable, and that none could deal with them in that way. At last, somehow he urged me to give my judgment of them; when I let him know that they did not satisfy me to be of his mind, but went no further with him. Upon

this he forebore coming any more to our lecture; but he unavoidably contrived to bring me into the controversy, which I shunned. For there came unto me five or six of his chief proselytes, as if they were yet unresolved, and desired me to give them in writing the arguments which satisfied me for infant baptism. I asked them whether they came not by Mr. Tombes' direction; and they confessed that they did. I asked them whether they had read the books of Mr. Cobbet, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Church, Mr. Blake, for infant baptism; and they told me, no. I desired them to read what is written already, before they called for more, and then come to me, and tell me what they had to say against them. But this they would by no means do, they must have my writings. I told them, that now they plainly confessed that they came upon a design to promote their party by contentious writings, and not in sincere desire to be informed as they pretended. To be short, they had no more modesty than to insist on their demands, and to tell me, that if they turned against infant baptism, and I denied to give them my arguments in writing, they must lay it upon me. I asked them, whether they would continue unresolved till Mr. Tombes and I had done our writings, seeing it was some years since Mr. Blake and he began, and had not ended yet. But no reasoning served the turn with them, they still called for my written arguments. When I saw their factious design and immodesty, I bade them tell Mr. Tombes, that he should neither thus command me to lose a year's time in my weakness in quarrelling with him, nor should have his end in insulting over me, as if I fled from the light of truth. I therefore offered him, if we must needs contend, that we might do it the shortest and most satisfactory way, by spending one day in a dispute at his own church, where I should attend him, that his people might not remain unsatisfied, till they saw which of us would have the last word; and after that we would consider of writing.

"So Mr. Tombes and I agreed to meet at his church on the first day of January, 1649. And in great weakness thither I came, and from nine of the clock in the morning till five at night, in a crowded congregation, we continued our dispute; which was all spent in managing one argument, from infants' right to church-membership to their right to baptism; of which he often complained, as if I assaulted him in a new way, which he had not considered of before. But this was not the first time that I had dealt with Anabaptists, few having so much to do with them

in the army as I had. In a word, this dispute satisfied all my own people, and the country that came in, and Mr. Tombes' own townsmen, except about twenty whom he had perverted, who gathered into his church; which never increased to above twenty-two, that I could learn." [a]

So much for Baxter's account of this personal rencounter. Wood, who was no friend to either party, says, "'Tis verily thought that Tombes was put upon the project of going to Bewdley purposely to tame Baxter and his party, who then carried all the country before them. They preached against one another's doctrines, and published books against each other. Tombes was the Coryphæus of the Anabaptists, and Baxter of the Presbyterians. Both had a very great company of auditors, who came many miles on foot round about to admire them. Once, I think oftener, they disputed face to face; and their followers were like two armies: and at last it came to pass, that they fell together by the ears, whereby hurt was done, and the civil magistrate had much ado to quiet them. All scholars, there and present, who knew the way of disputing and managing arguments, did conclude that Tombes got the better of Baxter by far." [b]

The verbal dispute, as might be expected, soon assumed a more tangible form, and appeared in print. Baxter, having in the dedication to the first edition of his 'Saint's Rest,' referred to his dispute at Bewdley, and to the victory which he conceived he had there obtained, Tombes shortly afterwards published 'An Antidote against the Venom' contained in this passage, which occasioned Baxter to publish his principal work on this subject: 'Plain Scripture Proof of Infants' Church Membership and Baptism; being the arguments prepared for, and partly managed in, the public dispute with Mr. Tombes, at Bewdley, on the first day of January, 1649. With a full reply to what he then answered, and what is contained in his sermon since preached, in his printed books, his MS. on 1 Cor. vii. 14: with a reply to his valedictory oration at Bewdley; and a Correction for his Antidote.' 1650. 4to.

In the preface to this treatise he gives some account of its "conception and nativity," from which I shall present an extract or two. The progress of his mind respecting baptism, which is remarkably similar to the process through which many individuals have gone in reference to the same subject, is thus

[a] Life, part i. p. 96. [b] Athen. Oxon. vol. iii. p. 1063.

stated by him: "When I was called forth to the sacred, ministerial work, though my zeal was strong, and I can truly say, that a fervent desire of winning souls to God was my motive, yet being young, and of small experience, and no great reading, being then a stranger to almost all the fathers, and most of the schoolmen, I was a novice in knowledge, and my conceptions were uncertain, shallow, and crude. In some mistakes I was confident, and in some truths I was very doubtful and suspicious. Among others, by that time I had baptized but two children at Bridgnorth, I began to have some doubt of the lawfulness of infant baptism, whereupon, I silently forbore the practice, and set myself, as I was able, to the study of the point. One part of my temptation was the doctrine of some divines who ran too far in the other extreme. I had read Dr. Burgess, and some years after Mr. Bedford, for baptismal regeneration; and heard it in the common prayer that God would bless baptism to the infant's regeneration, which I thought they had meant of a real and not a relative change. I soon discerned the error of this doctrine, when I found in Scripture that repentance and faith in the aged were ever prerequisite, and that no word of God did make that the end to infants which was prerequisite in others; that signs cannot, by moral operation, be the instruments of a real change on infants, but only of a relative; and that to dream of a physical instrumentality, was worse than popish, and to do that in baptism which transubstantiation hath done in the Lord's-supper, even to tie God to the constant working of a miracle.

"Upon my first serious study, I presently discerned that though infants were not capable of what is before expressed, nor of every benefit by baptism, as are the aged, yet that they were capable of the principal ends; that it might be a sign to enter them church members, and solemnize their dedication to Christ, and engage them to be his people, and to take him for their Lord and Saviour, and so to confer on them remission of sins, and what Christ by the covenant promiseth to the baptized.

"Yet did I remain doubtful some time after, by reason the Scriptures spoke so sparingly of infant baptism, and because my apprehensions of those things, which in themselves were clear and certain, remained crude and weak till time had helped them to digest and ripen. And the many weak arguments which I met with in the words and writings of some divines, to which I formed most of the same answers as Mr. T. now doth, were not

the least stumbling-block in my way. I resolved, therefore, silently to forbear the practice while I further studied the point. And being more in doubt about the other sacrament than this, I durst not adventure upon a full, pastoral charge, but to preach only as a lecturer till I were fully resolved. In which state I continued where I now am, till I was removed by the wars, still thinking and speaking very favourably of mere Anabaptists." [p]

He then proceeds to give an account of the discussions which took place on this subject while he was in Coventry; of the full examination of it which he was there led to institute; and of the progress of his controversy with Tombes, as already stated. According to his account, he was instrumental in Mr. Tombes' coming to Bewdley; and he solemnly avers, that throughout the whole affair Tombes was the aggressor. He indeed told a different tale; and a good deal of angry correspondence took place between them. To determine the question, who was the first and principal aggressor, is now unnecessary; and the detail of all the circumstances which finally led to Baxter's publication, would be as tedious as it would be unprofitable. The volume itself contains a considerable portion of valuable matter relative to the controversy, and also a great deal that is irrelevant. It abounds with numerous and subtle distinctions, for which most of Baxter's controversial writings are distinguished. It presents a great deal that would exceedingly puzzle an adversary to answer, and much of which he might take advantage. One of his great objects is to settle the right of infants to be church members, which he considered of more importance than their baptism; but it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory idea of all that he intended by their membership.

Tombes replied in his 'Precursor; or, a Forerunner to a large view of a Dispute concerning Infant Baptism.' 1652. 4to. This large work he produced at three several times, making in all two very thick, closely-printed quarto volumes. Its general title is, 'Antipædobaptism; or, no plain or obscure proof of Infants' Baptism or Church-Membership,' &c. In this voluminous production he replies to Baxter, Marshall, Geree, Cobbet, Blake, Church, Stephens, Homes, Featley, Hammond, Baillie, Brinslee, Sydenham, Fuller, Drew, Lyfford, Carter, Rutherford, Cragge, Cotton, Stalham, Hall, and others. It was published between the years 1652 and 1657; and affords no small proof

[p] Preface, pp. 2, 3.

of the industry of its author, as well as of his devoted zeal in the cause which he had espoused.

Baxter's work passed through several editions, a proof of the interest then taken in the controversy; in the third of which, he notices Tombes's 'Precursor,' and several other publications for and against him. His own account of the work supplies all the additional information respecting it which it is necessary to introduce. "The book," he says, "God blessed with unexpected success to stop abundance from turning Anabaptists, and reclaiming many, both in city and country, and some of the officers of the Irish and English forces, and gave a considerable check to their proceedings. Concerning it, I shall only tell the reader, that there are towards the latter part of it, many enigmatical reflections upon the Anabaptists, for their horrid scandals, which the reader that lived not in those times will hardly understand; but the cutting off the king, and rebelling against him and the parliament, the Ranters and other sects that sprung out of them, the invading of Scotland, and the approving of these, were the crimes there intended; which were not then to be more plainly spoken of, when their strength and fury were so high. After the writing of that book, I wrote a postscript against the doctrine of Dr. Burgess and Mr. Thomas Bedford, which I supposed to go on the other extreme; and therein I answered part of a treatise of Dr. Samuel Ward's, which Mr. Bedford published; which proved to be Mr. Thomas Gataker's, whom I defended, who is Dr. Ward's censor; but I knew it not till Mr. Gataker after told me.

"But, after these writings, I was greatly in doubt whether it be not certain that all the infants of true believers are justified and saved, if they die before actual sin. My reason was, because it is the same justifying, saving covenant of grace which their parents and they are in, and as real faith and repentance is that condition on the parents' part which giveth them their right to actual remission and adoption; so to be the children of such is all the condition which is required in infants, in order to the same benefits; and without asserting this, the advantage of the Anabaptists is greater than every one doth imagine. But I never thought with Dr. Ward, that all baptized children had this benefit and qualitative sanctification also; nor with Dr. Burgess and Mr. Bedford, that all converted at age had inherent

seminal grace in baptism certainly given them; nor with Bishop Davenant, that all justly baptized had relative grace of justification and adoption, but only that all the infants of true believers, who have right to the covenant and baptism in *foro cœli*, as well as in *foro ecclesiæ*, have also thereby right to the pardon of original sin, and to adoption, and to heaven, which right is by baptism sealed and delivered to them. This I wrote to Mr. Gataker, who returned me a kind and candid answer, but such as did not remove my scruples; and this occasioned him to print Bishop Davenant's disputations with his answer. The opinion, which I most incline to, is the same which the Synod of Dort expresseth, and that which I conjecture Dr. Davenant meant, or I am sure came next to."[q]

Tombes, in the third part of his 'Antipædobaptism,' published in 1659, introduced some private correspondence between Baxter and himself, which had taken place subsequently to Baxter's last publication on infant church-membership, and baptism; and there replied at length to some of his sentiments. Baxter, after a lapse of nineteen years, published 'More Proofs of Infant Church-Membership, and consequently their Rights to Baptism; or, a Second Defence of our Infant Rights and Mercies.' 1675. 8vo.

This volume is divided into three parts, which, contain, he tells us, "The plain proof of God's statute or covenant for Infants' Church-Membership from the creation, and the continuance of it till the institution of baptism; with the defence of that proof against the frivolous exceptions of Mr. Tombes. A confutation of Mr. Tombes' arguments. A confutation of the strange forgeries of Mr. Danvers against the ambiguity of infant baptism, and of his many calumnies against myself and writings. A catalogue of fifty-six new commandments and doctrines, which he and the sectaries who join with him in those calumnies own. Animadversions on Mr. Danvers' reply to Mr. Wells;" all of which he declares to be "extorted by their unquiet importunity."[r]

[q] Life, part i. p. 109.

[r] The doctrine of the Synod of Dort, on the subject referred to by Baxter, is as follows:—"Quando quidem, &c.—That is, Seeing that we are to judge of the will of God by his word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy; not, indeed, by nature, but by the benefit of the gracious covenant, in which they are comprehended along with their parents; pious parents ought not to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom

The dispute was now enlarged, including others as well as Tombes. Danvers was a private gentleman of small fortune who had joined the Baptists in the time of the Commonwealth. He was then governor of Stafford, and a justice of the peace. He was a fifth-monarchist in some of his principles, though he did not go the full length of the party in regard to practice. He was apprehended as one of them, and lodged in the Tower, where he appears to have remained many years, as he only obtained his release in 1671. Having been at some private meetings, where measures were concerted in favour of the Duke of Monmouth, he was obliged to flee to Holland after the failure of that attempt, where he died shortly afterwards.[s]

His work in this controversy, to which Baxter refers, is one of considerable labour: 'A Treatise on Baptism, wherein that of Believers, and that of Infants, is examined by the Scriptures, with the history of both, out of Antiquity,' &c. As an historical work, it displays very considerable research. His opponents accused him of doing injustice to the fathers and ecclesiastical writers of the primitive church; and both parties found in the ambiguity and uncertainty of these authorities, sufficient employment for their time and patience. He was answered by Blinman and Wills, as well as by Baxter, and defended himself in three distinct treatises, published in 1675.

In the same year in which Baxter's last work was published, he produced another small performance, to which it had led—'Richard Baxter's Review of the State of Christian Infants.' 1676. 8vo. In this pamphlet, he inquires "whether children should be entered in covenant with godly baptism, and be visible members of his church, and have any covenant right to pardon and salvation?" This publication was occasioned by Mr. E. Hutchinson, Mr. Danvers, and Mr. Tombes, all of whom had assailed him.[t]

God hath called in infancy out of this life."—*Art. on Predestination*, Sect. 17. Davenant was one of the English divines deputed by King James to attend the Synod of Dort. He was then professor of divinity in the University of Cambridge, and was afterwards made bishop of Salisbury.

[s] Crosby's Hist. of the Baptists, vol. iii. p. 97.

[t] On the subject of infant salvation, which has been a source of great anxiety and distress to many, I beg to refer the reader to the following work, which is far more satisfactory than any thing else known to me on this deeply interesting topic—'An Essay on the Salvation of all Dying in Infancy; including Hints on the Adamic and Christian Dispensations,' by the Rev. David Russell, of Dundee, 12mo. 2d Edit. 1826.

It is deeply to be regretted that this controversy should have so long distracted the church of Christ, and that many eminent men have devoted so large a portion of valuable time and strength to its discussion. On no one point of Christian practice has so much been written, and on both sides to so little purpose, as the parties seem nearly as far from agreement as ever. It has tended greatly to injure the cause of religion among the Dissenters, having divided their affections and reduced their strength in almost every place. Of the same mind on every other topic of importance, it is lamentable that a difference of opinion respecting one ordinance, and that of a personal nature, affecting each individual but once in his life, should cause greater strife and injury than all other subjects of difference together. The doctrine of free communion, however, as far as baptism is concerned, promises fair, in the course of time, to extinguish a controversy, which all the books that have been written upon it have entirely failed to determine. In this result, had he lived to witness it, none would have rejoiced more than Baxter; as he was more zealous in contending for the communion of all Christians, than for infant baptism, notwithstanding his warmth in maintaining it.

The Quakers, as a distinct sect, made their first appearance in the times of Baxter, and during the agitations of the civil wars. His controversies with them were much briefer than those in which he engaged with the Baptists, but were sufficiently keen while they lasted. His opinion of them has been already given in the first part of this work. If that opinion be regarded as severe, it should be remembered that the body referred to has undergone a great change for the better, in its spirit and mode of acting, since the time of Baxter. He complains bitterly of the treatment that he experienced from them, which must, therefore, be regarded as an apology for his manner of treating them in return. Speaking of them many years after their first appearance, he says:

"The Quakers, in their shops, when I go along London streets, say, 'Alas! poor man, thou art yet in darkness.' They have oft come into the congregation, when I had liberty to preach Christ's Gospel, and cried out against me as a deceiver of the people. They have followed me home, crying out in the streets, 'The day of the Lord is coming, when thou shalt

perish as a deceiver.' They have stood in the market-place, and under my window, year after year, crying out to the people, 'Take heed of your priests, they deceive your souls!' and if they saw any one wear a lace or neat clothing, they cried out to me, 'These are the fruit of thy ministry.' If they spake to me with the greatest ignorance or nonsense, it was with as much fury and rage as if a bloody heart had appeared in their faces; so that though I never hurt, or occasioned the hurt, of one of them that I know of, their tremulent countenances told me what they would have done had I been in their power. This was from 1656 to 1659."[u]

The idea of danger from them, intimated in this passage, was doubtless an entire mistake. Their words and spirit were frequently violent and provoking; but their conduct was invariably harmless. Had they been less opposed, and treated in a more Christian manner, they would have attracted less attention, and been less formidable to those who opposed them. Considering the abuses of divine ordinances which had so long and so extensively prevailed, it is not surprising that such a system as Quakerism should have arisen; and it may, perhaps, have answered a useful purpose in calling the attention of men professing Christianity to the great design of all its ordinances, and to which they ought ever to be regarded as subservient—the promotion of spirituality of mind, and the enjoyment of communion with God.

To form a correct idea of Baxter's writings on this subject, it is necessary to advert to his fears of the subversion of the Christian ministry in the nation by some of the measures of the Rump Parliament. Exceedingly alarmed by certain reports which he had heard, he exerted his influence, which appears to have been very powerful, in the county of Worcester, to promote an appeal to Parliament. The effect of this appeared in "The humble petition of many thousands, gentlemen, freeholders, and others, of the county of Worcester, to the parliament of the Commonwealth of England, in behalf of the able, faithful, godly ministry of this nation." This petition was drawn up by Baxter, and presented by Colonel Bridges and Mr. Thomas Foley, on the 22d of December, 1652. It was afterwards printed, with the answer of the speaker, in the name of the House, thanking the petitioners for their zeal and good

[u] Works, vol. xvi. p. 152.

affections, and promising to take the petition into consideration. It expresses the fears of the petitioners, founded on various circumstances which are enumerated, that an attempt would be made to put down the ministry in the kingdom. It states the importance of the ministry both to the temporal and the spiritual good of the country; with the sin and danger of subverting it. It therefore prays for the preservation and encouragement of faithful ministers; that a suitable provision might be made for them; that attention might be paid to the dark parts of England and Wales; for the continued preservation of the universities and schools of learning; and lastly, that measures might be taken to heal the religious divisions which prevailed, and for the establishment of a better system of church government.

This petition was very offensive to those who viewed with an unfavourable eye a standing ministry, especially as supported by the state. The Quakers, in particular, who were then beginning to attract attention, were exceedingly hostile to the prayer presented to parliament; and George Fox attacked it in a pamphlet, entitled, 'The Threefold Estate of Antichrist.' This brought Baxter into the field with—

'The Worcestershire Petition to the Parliament for the Ministry of England, Defended by a Minister of Christ in that County, in answer to sixteen queries, printed in a book called, A Brief Discovery of the Threefold Estate of Antichrist,' &c. 1653. 4to. Baxter defends his petition against the queries contained in this performance, and retaliates with his characteristic acuteness in some counter queries at the end.

That the parliament then sitting seriously meditated the abolition, either of the ministry or of the tithes, is improbable. But a petition had been presented to it by a council of officers held at Whitehall on the 12th of August, 1652, which, among other things, prayed "that profane, scandalous, and ignorant ministers might be ejected, and men approved for godliness and gifts encouraged; and that a convenient maintenance might be provided for them, and the unequal, troublesome, and contentious way of tithes be taken away."[x] This petition was referred to a committee, after the speaker had, in the name of the House, thanked the petitioners for their zeal in the public cause. The report of this committee has been already given in page 139; from which it appears, that nothing further was recommended than some arrangements respecting the payment of tithes. It was

[x] Goodwin's Commonwealth, vol. iii. p. 419.

probably with a view to counteract this petition, however, that Baxter drew up the one from Worcestershire. That there was just ground of complaint against many of the clergy, is evident enough from Baxter's own account of them; and had the Rump Parliament enacted some measure for the support of the clergy, less liable to objection and abuse than the tithe system, it would have deserved well of the country, and saved its successors the labour and the honour which yet await them. It is evident that an attempt was made, which was both wise and moderate in itself, and would no doubt have been improved, till it had finally abolished an extensive and inveterate evil, had the powers which then were been permanently established.

Speaking of the petition and the events which followed it, he says in his own Life, "The sectaries were greatly annoyed, and one wrote a vehement invective against it; which I answered in a paper called 'The Defence of the Worcestershire Petition,' (which, by an oversight, is maimed by the want of the accuser's queries,) I knew not what kind of person he was that I wrote against, but it proved to be a Quaker; they being just now rising, and this being the first of their books, as far as I can remember, that I had ever seen.

"Presently, upon this, the Quakers began to make a great stir among us, acting the part of men in raptures, speaking in the manner of men inspired, and every where railing against tithes and ministers. They sent many papers of queries to divers ministers about us; to one of the chief of which I wrote an answer, and gave them as many more questions to answer, entitling it 'The Quaker's Catechism.' These pamphlets being but one or two days' work, were no great interruption to my better labours, and as they were of small worth, so also of small cost. The same ministers of our country, that are now silenced, are they that the Quakers most vehemently opposed, meddling little with the rest. The marvellous concurrence of instruments telleth us, that one principal agent doth act them all. I have oft asked the Quakers lately, Why they chose the same ministers to revile whom all the drunkards and sorcerers rail against? And why they cried out in our assemblies, Come down, thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou dog; and now never meddle with the pastors or congregations? They answer, that these men sin in the open light, and need none to discover them; that the Spirit hath his times both of severity and of lenity. But the truth is, they knew then they might be bold without any fear of suffering

by it: and now it is time for them to save their skins, they suffer enough for their own assemblies." [r]

The following is the pamphlet to which he refers in the above paragraph: 'The Quaker's Catechism; or, the Quakers questioned, their questions answered, and both published for the sake of those of them that have not yet sinned unto death; and of those ungrounded novices that are most in danger of their seduction.' 1657. 4to. In an introductory address to the reader, he explains the circumstances which originated his Catechism; giving an account, in much the same terms that we have already quoted, of the manner in which the Quakers assailed himself and his brethren. He then addresses the "Separatists and Anabaptists of England," whom he classes with the Quakers, accusing them of originating the "wild generation," which is the more immediate object of his attack. Then follows a long letter to a young friend, who was first inclined to be a Baptist, but fell in with the Quakers, and whom he had endeavoured to reclaim. Next comes a paper, or information taken on oath at Bristol, of one who represents some of the Quakers as disguised Romish priests: then follows the Catechism itself; in which the controversy is treated in a very desultory manner. Indeed, the doctrines of the Friends had scarcely been brought to a consistent form; it would consequently have been vain to expect that the undisciplined troops, composing their army, should either attack or be attacked in regular battle. Baxter having been treated very unceremoniously, is as unceremonious in his addresses and questions to "the miserable creatures," whom he considered to be labouring under dreadful delusion. The following specimen of his questions will give the reader a fair sample of his mode of interrogating them. The subject is—the sufficiency of the light, which all men are supposed to enjoy.

"Was it sufficient before Christ preached the Gospel, and sent his apostles? or, is it now sufficient to all that never heard the Gospel? If so, is not the Gospel a vain and needless thing? or, are you Christians that dare so affirm? If the world have sufficient light, what need they your teaching, or discourse, or conviction? If all have sufficient within them, what need they any convicting grace? Why did Christ send Paul to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, if they

[r] Life, part i. pp. 115, 116.

had sufficient light before? I pray you do not disdain to tell me, when you have rubbed your eyes, if all men have sufficient light within them, why you got up into the judgment-seat, and pronounced me so oft to be in darkness, and to be void of the light, and to have none of the Spirit. If all have it, why may not I have it?"

In the same year in which he published his Catechism, he sent out a series of monthly tracts, which were chiefly intended to counteract the principles and progress of Quakerism. The first appeared in August, 1657, and is entitled, 'One Sheet for the Ministry against Malignants of all sorts.' In September, he published 'One Sheet against the Quakers;' and in the following month, 'A Second Sheet for the Ministry, justifying our Calling against Quakers, Seekers, and Papists, and all that deny us to be the Ministers of Christ.'

Into these tracts it is unnecessary to enter particularly, as their titles sufficiently explain their nature and design. They furnish additional evidence to much that has been already adduced of the ceaseless vigilance and untiring labour of Baxter. His eye was every where; his hand was in every work. Alive to all the dangers and temptations then abounding in the country, he employed, with the utmost promptness, all the means which he could devise to avert the evils, or to warn men against them. He admonished Cromwell, he addressed the parliament, and, at the same time, expostulated with a Seeker, questioned a Quaker, and catechised a child. When it was necessary, he produced a folio; when less might answer the purpose, he published a monthly tract. Well might he give the following answer to the reproaches of idleness thrown out against the ministry:

"The Quakers say, we are idle drones, that labour not, and therefore should not eat. The worst I wish you is, that you had but my ease instead of your labour. I have reason to take myself for the least of saints, and yet I fear not to tell the accuser that I take the labour of most tradesmen in the town to be a pleasure to the body, in comparison with mine; though for the ends and the pleasure of my mind, I would not change it with the greatest prince. Their labour preserveth health, and mine consumeth it; they work in ease, and I in continual pain; they have hours and days of recreation, I have scarce time to eat and drink. Nobody molesteth them for their labour, but

the more I do, the more hatred and trouble I draw upon me. If a Quaker ask me what all this labour is, let him come and see, or do as I do, and he shall know.*

Baxter was, sometime after this, attacked in a huge volume with a singular title: 'The Rustic's Alarm to the Rabbies; or, the Country correcting the Universities and Clergy, and not without Cause, Contesting for the Truth against the Nursing Mothers, and their Children, &c. By way of Intercourse held in Special with four of the Clergies' Chieftans, John Owen, Thomas Danson, John Tombes, and Richard Baxter; which four *Foremen* hold the Sense and Senseless Faith of the whole Fry, &c. By Samuel Fisher, who some time went astray among the many Shepherds, but is now returned to the great Shepherd and Overseer of the Soul.' 1660. 4to. pp. 600. To this enormous volume of rant, it does not appear that any of the persons attacked, made a reply. Fisher was originally in the church, and chaplain to Sir Arthur Haselrigg: he afterwards became a Baptist, and wrote the only folio volume which I believe has ever been written on that side of the question, 'Baby Baptism, mere Babyism,' in which he animadverts on Baxter. He soon after became Quaker, and laboured hard to destroy the things which he had formerly built up. He is said to have been a man of piety and of learning, but fickle and violent. Nothing but an inspection of his books can enable any one to form an idea of the extraordinary style in which he wrote.

At a subsequent period of his life, Baxter engaged in a personal controversy on the principles of Quakerism, with William Penn, but it led to no publication on the points in debate. The discussion has been referred to in the former part of this work. By that time, the number of the Friends had greatly increased, their principles and practice had assumed a more definite form, and their conduct, in regard to the great subject of religious liberty, had entitled them to the approbation and esteem of all the friends of religion and freedom. In Penn and Barclay they found abler and more successful defenders and advocates than Fox or Fisher, who required to be met with different arguments, and in a better style and spirit, than had been employed by Baxter.

In the last year of his life, Baxter was led to engage in a controversy with the Rev. Thomas Beverly, on the subject of the

Millenium, and the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of those subjects which appears, from time to time, to have agitated the church of Christ, from the very beginning. Even in the days of the apostles, some indulged the expectation that the coming of the Lord was at hand, and, under the influence of this feeling, appear to have relaxed in their attention to the ordinary duties of life.* In the subsequent ages, the doctrine of the Millenium was a favourite speculation with many, though very various and discordant sentiments were entertained respecting it. At the Reformation it had its patrons among those whose imaginations were excited by the extraordinary events of the period, to expect that the time of the restitution of all things was near. During the Commonwealth, the fifth-monarchy men brought this subject again into prominent notice; but the extravagances of some of them, and the destruction which they brought on themselves, sunk it into contempt. It was held, however, by some most respectable and learned individuals, both before and after the time of the Commonwealth. It is only necessary to mention, in proof of this, the names of Joseph Mede and Henry More; men alike distinguished for learning and talents, and for their mild and conciliatory dispositions.

Among the most strenuous and ardent supporters of this doctrine, was Thomas Beverly, a man by no means destitute of good sense, scriptural information, and ardent zeal. He was pastor of a dissenting congregation, which assembled in Cutlers' Hall, and began his career as a writer on the prophecies, about the period of the Revolution, of which he was a most devoted friend and admirer. In a work published in 1688, dedicated to the Prince of Orange, he endeavours to show that the Papacy could not last above nine years, and that the Millenium would commence in 1697. From this time to that portentous year, he continued to send forth his publications on the subject in great numbers, challenging every body to answer them. He lived to see all his prophetical calculations fail; so that on the year in which they should have commenced their fulfilment, he resigned his pastoral charge, retired into the country, and shortly after sunk into obscurity. Such was the fate of a man whose talents, ardour, and devotedness, had they been better directed, might have rendered him eminently useful; but whose misdirected zeal and erroneous calculations issued only in dis-

* 2 Thess. ii. iii. 5—12.

appointment to himself, sorrow to his friends, and triumph to the enemies of religion.[a]

Beverly was the friend and correspondent of Baxter. He admired his talents, respected his piety, and courted his acquaintance. Knowing the candour with which Baxter listened to every plausible representation on religious subjects, and being convinced that if he could but engage his attention, he would openly espouse his cause, or enter the lists against him; either of which results would answer his purpose by calling attention to his own publications. He accordingly presented him with them as they appeared, and most perseveringly solicited his observations upon them. Having published his 'Catechism of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Thousand Years; showing by Scripture that the great articles of the Redemption, the Resurrection, the Mystery of the Saints not dying but changed, the Judgment, the Delivering up of the Kingdom to God, all in all, cannot be explained at full dimensions without it;' he sent it to Baxter, with an earnest request to be favoured with his opinion of it. The substance of Beverly's doctrine appears to be: that Christ's kingdom begins only at the Millenium; that the commencement of the Millenium and the resurrection of the saints, are parallel events; that the Millenium is the day of judgment spoken of in Scripture; that during it the saints shall increase and multiply upon the earth; that the wicked shall also be upon the earth; and that a grand conflict shall take place at the battle of Armageddon, when the wicked shall be destroyed. With all this is mixed up some strange speculations about the person of Christ.

On receiving the 'Millenary Catechism,' Baxter addressed a long and kind letter to the author, proposing a series of questions to him. He assures him they were written not in a spirit of captiousness, but from a real desire of information, which he considered Beverly well qualified to supply. As these questions are not unimportant at the present time, I shall extract a few of them.

"Doth the Revelation mention *one* thousand years or *two?* If but *one*, doth not that begin upon the fall of Babylon? Why say you that Christ's kingdom beginneth at the one thousand years, when so many things tell us of his kingdom existent long before? Hath he not governed by laws, and initial execution, long before? yea, the kingdom is among us and within us. Do

[a] Wilson's Hist. of Diss. Churches, vol. iii. pp. 64—66.

not the spirits of the departed just, with the angels, now constitute the general assembly above; and is not that the kingdom of Christ, and doth he not now reign over all? Shall these blessed souls come down for one thousand years, and dwell either with devils, or where devils now dwell, in the air? If they come thither with Christ at judgment, shall they dwell there so long? and is it no worse a place than where they are? Seeing the heavens that now are must then be burnt, is not the air the lower part of the heavens, or that at least, and shall Christ and the new Jerusalem dwell in the consuming fire? I cannot possibly find what time you allot to the conflagration of heaven; whether it shall continue burning all the one thousand years, or be quickly dispatched at first; nor yet what time or measure you set to the conflagration of the earth. Doth it burn all at once, or by gradations, as Dr. Cressener thinks, beginning at Rome, and so going on? or is it all the one thousand years proceeding to its dispatch? If so, it is a wonder that this long fire consumeth not Gog and Magog, and if the inhabitants fly from it, as at Etna, whither do they carry their goods, and where will they find room, both saints and sinners? Is it the new earth all the while it is burning? If it be burnt at all at the beginning, where are the surviving saints all the while?

"You avoid many difficulties by holding but one resurrection; but what then becomes of the bodies of all the wicked, who die during the one thousand years? Do soul and body go to hell unburied, or do only their souls suffer, and their bodies never rise? Is there one conflagration or two? The Scriptures speak but of one; and then what becomes of your new earth at the end of the one thousand years? are not Gog and Magog burnt at last? Is your beloved city on earth in one place? and where? or over the whole earth? Is not the number that cover the camp, as the sand of the sea, with Gog and Magog, inconsistent with the description of the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and with the times of restitution, when the groaning creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into a paradisiacal state?" [b]

Such is a specimen of the questions which Baxter proposed to Beverly, on his having transmitted to him a copy of the work which he had published. Could I have quoted them all, they would have shown how amply Baxter, even at this advanced period of his life, entered into the subject, and that no portion

[b] Letter to Beverly.—*Baxter MSS.*

of his natural acuteness had yet failed him. It does not seem to have produced much effect on Beverly; and therefore, in the course of the year 1691, appeared a 4to tract, entitled 'The Glorious Kingdom of Christ described and clearly vindicated, &c., by Richard Baxter, whose comfort is only the hope of that kingdom.'

In this work he enters the lists with the Millenarians in general: with those who boldly asserted the future restoration and reign of the Jews, and the one thousand years' rest before the conflagration; with those also who expected a reign of one thousand years after the conflagration; and with Beverly in particular, in answer to his challenges and censures, of which he appears to have been very liberal. Baxter endeavours to explain the promise of the new heavens and the new earth; and contends for the everlasting duration of Christ's kingdom. He undertakes to prove that the doctrines of Beverly, and the Millenarians, are chimerical, and without foundation in Scripture; that the views commonly entertained on these subjects are in accordance with all correct interpretation of the prophecies of the Bible; that Christ's kingdom is spiritual in its nature, properly commenced at his resurrection, and will continue till the final conflagration, when it will be perfected for ever in heaven.

From this work, it appears that Baxter did not believe that the ten tribes were ever so entirely lost as many suppose, and that part of them existed in the time of Christ and the Apostles; consequently that the recovery of such a body, according to the expectations of many, is not to be looked for. Nor does he appear to have believed in any national conversion of the Jewish people, in their restoration to their own country, in their instrumentality for the conversion of the world, or in their future superiority over the nations. His reasonings on all these topics, cannot be given. I do not agree with him in every point, but I have no hesitation in saying, that though less known than many of his works, it is one of the acutest and best written of his numerous publications. The opinions of Beverly were not new when he wrote; they had been frequently started and exploded before. They have been repeatedly revived since, maintained with no less confidence, and propagated with equal zeal; and in future ages will probably continue to experience the same fate. One passage of Baxter's tract, relating to Beverly, I think merits to be quoted:

"Your writings make it plain, that you are a good man, of

deep thoughts, fallen into a fond esteem of your new, unripe conceptions, and wrapt up thereby into a diseased conceitedness. How you will be able to bear it when Providence and experience have confuted you in 1697, I know not. But I am the more bold to foretell your failing, by my persuasion, that your exposition of the Revelation, is a mere mistake from the beginning almost to the end.

"Wonder not that nobody writeth to confute you. For men love not to trouble themselves with convincing every single man of his errors. The reason why I attempt it is, because by the seduction of some of my friends, and the general inclination of the Antinomian, Anabaptist, and separating party to this conceit of the thousand years' kingdom, I understand that your opinion, which formerly was tolerable as confined to a few conceited good men, is now becoming a great article of their faith and religion, especially since I see that in all your professed extraordinary humility, you brand all who dissent from you as semi-Sadducees of the apostacy, and constantly challenge all pastors and doctors to answer you; and maintain (though you conform) that God's word knoweth not a clergy."[e]

Beverly published a short answer to Baxter, as full of confidence as ever. In consequence of which, Baxter brought out quickly after, another pamphlet in 'Reply to Mr. Thomas Beverly's Answer to my Reasons against his Doctrine of the Thousand Years' Middle Kingdom, and of the Conversion of the Jews.' Feb. 20, 1691. 4to. This tract consists of only twenty-one pages, and must have been among the last things of a controversial nature which Baxter wrote, as appears from the date on the title-page, where he also speaks of himself "as passing to that world where we shall see face to face." Beverly had the last word in 'The One Thousand Years' Kingdom of Christ in its full Scripture State, answering Mr. Baxter's new Treatise in opposition to it.' 1691. 4to.

Thus ended Baxter's debate with Beverly on the subject of the Millenium; and here must terminate our account of the

[e] Pp. 45, 46. It is a very curious fact, which appears to have struck Baxter, as he refers to it more than once in this pamphlet, that the abettors of the doctrine of the Millenium, against which he contended, were mostly of two classes—Conformists and High Calvinists. That this is the case still, is known to all who are acquainted with the parties who have agitated this question in latter years. This is not the place to account for this co-incidence, but it is certainly worthy of some attention. Beverly was a Dissenting Conformist, and attached to the high side of the Christian controversy in which he took part.

minor controversies in which he was engaged. Employed in such affairs during the greater part of his public life, he seems to have become so accustomed to the warfare and language of religious controversy, that it had comparatively little influence on his temper. He could pass without effort from debating Baptism to meditations on the 'Saint's Rest;' and from disputes about the Millenium, to the expression of his 'Dying Thoughts.' He opposed firmly what he believed to be error; but though he often used the language of sharpness, the law of kindness never ceased to reign in his breast.

CHAPTER XI.

POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'Humble Advice'—'Holy Commonwealth'—Origin and Design of the Work—Involved the Author in much trouble—The Political Principles which it avows — Recalled by Baxter — Motives for doing so—'Church History of Bishops'—Attacked by Morrice—'True History of Bishops and Councils Defended'—'Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Baxter'—'Penitent Confession'—Conduct of Long towards Baxter—'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ'—Character of this Work—Imperfectly Edited by Sylvester—Calamy's Account of it, and its Reception—His Abridgment of it —Controversy to which it led.

It is difficult to define what ought, in particular circumstances, to be the conduct of a Christian minister respecting political affairs. Neither the profession of Christianity, nor the office of the ministry, deprives a man of his civil privileges, or of a right to exercise them. At the same time, "all things which are lawful may not be expedient." Every man, and especially every minister of Christ, is bound to study what may tend most effectually to promote the grand design of Christianity, and to abstain as much as possible, both from giving offence to the weak, and exciting unnecessary prejudices against him on the part of others. It is easy to act when the affairs of a country are moving on with regularity and smoothness; but when "the foundations are all out of course," and "civil dudgeon" runs high, the most inoffensive and conscientious persons may frequently be exposed to great difficulty. Taking part in their country's affairs will expose them to the charge of meddling and sedition; while entire neutrality may probably bring upon them the no less injurious insinuation of selfish indifference. To these difficulties religious people were greatly exposed during the trying period of England's struggle for civil and religious freedom.

Baxter was not a man formed for neutrality. It was not in his nature to avoid taking part with the weak and righteous,

and opposing their oppressors. His mind entered into every subject which interested his countrymen, and regardless of consequences to himself, he fearlessly committed both his actions and his opinions to the public. In the former part of this work, we have seen how he joined the army of the commonwealth, with his reasons for so doing. He was a lover of constitutional monarchy, but an enemy of despotism; and regarding the government as determined to crush the religion and liberties of his country, he felt himself bound to support those whom he viewed as its best and only friends, though many of their measures he saw reason to condemn and oppose.

It must be confessed, however, that he was not at home on political matters. They were uncongenial to his heavenly mind, and to all his habits and pursuits. Compliance with the wishes of others, the promotion of what he considered the peace and interests of religion and the commonwealth, or the defence of himself against gross misrepresentations, were the motives by which he appears to have been generally actuated in all his writings of this description. Some of the works which are now to come before us contain much information respecting the period they relate to, and are, on this account, still important and interesting.

The first of these which claims our attention, 'The Worcestershire Petition,' with Baxter's defence of it, may be regarded as the earliest of his political performances; but as sufficient notice of them has been taken in treating of the Quaker controversy, with which these pamphlets were closely connected, it is unnecessary to advert to them again. His next work in this department was not published by himself. 'Richard Baxter's Humble Advice; or, the Heads of those Things which were offered to many Honourable Members of Parliament by Mr. Richard Baxter, at the end of his Sermon, December 24, at the Abbey of Westminster: with some Additions, as they were delivered by him to a friend, that desired them, who thought meet to make them public.' 1655. 4to. There is nothing in this tract worthy of particular notice; it contains some instructions, which the author thought calculated to promote reformation and peace.

The work which, of all others written by Baxter, created the strongest sensation at the time, and occasioned the greatest trouble to him afterwards, was his 'Holy Commonwealth; or,

Political Aphorisms: opening the true principles of Government; for the healing of the *mistakes*, and resolving the *doubts*, that most endanger and trouble ENGLAND at this time; and directing the desires of sober Christians that long to see the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.' 1659. 8vo. The following is his own account of the origin and object of this work, with the treatment which it experienced.

"The book which hath furnished my enemies with matter of reviling, which none must dare to answer, is my 'Holy Commonwealth.' The occasion of it was this: when our pretorian sectarian bands had cut all bonds, pulled down all government, and after the death of the king had twelve years kept out his son, few men saw any probability of his restitution, and every self-conceited fellow was ready to offer his model for a new form of government. Mr. Hobbes' 'Leviathan' had pleased many.[d] Mr. Thomas White, the great Papist, had written his Politics in English, for the interest of the Protector, to prove that subjects ought to submit and subject themselves to such a change.[e] Mr. James Harrington (they say, by the help of Mr. H. Neville[f]) had written a book in folio for a democracy, called Oceana,[g] seriously describing a form near to the Venetian, and

[d] Hobbes produced his 'Leviathan; or, the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth,' in 1651. Few books have occasioned more or fiercer controversy than this production of the philosopher of Malmsbury. It is an able, learned, but most paradoxical and irreligious performance. Its principles would justify all social disorder and all impiety. But the scales of the Leviathan are very hard to penetrate, and have injured most of the weapons which have been tried upon it. Lord Clarendon "*surveyed*" it, and Bishop Bramhall endeavoured to "*catch*" it; but the monster still lived, exercising the ingenuity and courage of many a successive combatant. The most formidable of his antagonists were—Cumberland, in his work 'De Legibus Naturæ,' and Cudworth, in the 'Intellectual System.'

[e] The book of White to which Baxter here refers is, 'The Grounds of Obedience and Government,' which appeared in 1655. The author was a Catholic priest, possessing considerable talents as a philosopher, and whose writings, both on theological and philosophical subjects, were numerous. He disputed some of the dogmas of his own church, and used to wrangle with Hobbes, with whom he was intimate. In the book above referred to, he justifies the resistance offered to Charles I., and supported the government of Cromwell. He died in 1676, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

[f] Henry Neville, according to Wood, was an ingenious and well-bred gentleman, and a good but conceited poet.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1119. He was an active member of a political club to which Harrington belonged.

[g] 'The Commonwealth of Oceana,' by Harrington, appeared in 1656, and was another of those theories of government, which were gendered during the Commonwealth, and with which Baxter appears to have been greatly dissa-

setting the people upon the desires of a change. After this, Sir H. Vane and his party were about their sectarian democratical model,[h] which Stubbs defended.[i] Rogers,[k] Needham,[l] and Mr. Bagshaw,[m] had also written against monarchy before. In the end of an epistle before my book on 'Crucifying the World,' I had spoken a few words against this innovation and opposition to monarchy; and having especially touched upon 'Oceana' and 'Leviathan,' Mr. Harrington seemed in a Bethlehem rage; for by way of scorn he printed half a sheet of foolish jests, in such words as idiots or drunkards use, railing at ministers as a pack

tisfied. It was written in imitation of the 'Atlantis' of Plato, and the 'Utopia' of Sir Thomas More; and, like both its celebrated prototypes, deserves to be viewed only as a political romance. It is constructed on the principles of pure republicanism, and was therefore not more acceptable to Cromwell than afterwards to Charles. The author was one of the most active, restless spirits of the Commonwealth,—ingenious and visionary, but very harmless. He died in a state of insanity, having for some time before his death imagined that his perspiration was turned into flies and bees. The celebrated Toland collected his works, to which he prefixed a Life. The 'Oceana' is worth the reading for its ingenuity and style.

[h] I suppose Baxter refers here to Vane's 'Healing Question,' in which he endeavours to adjust the points of government on democratical principles, combined with religion.

[i] Stubbs wrote an 'Essay in Defence of the Good Old Cause; or, a Discourse concerning the use and extent of the Power of the Civil Magistrate in Spiritual Affairs.' 1659. The preface to this work contains a defence of Vane; but he also wrote by itself 'A Vindication of that Prudent and Honourable Knight, Sir Henry Vane, from the Lies and Calumnies of Mr. Richard Baxter, in a Monitory Letter to the said Mr. B.' 1659. This is the book to which I suppose Baxter alludes.

[k] John Rogers, the Fifth-Monarchy man, wrote 'Christian Concertation with Mr. Prynne, Mr. Baxter, and Mr. Harrington, for the True Cause of the Commonwealth.' 1659. 4to. This is intended as an answer to Prynne's 'Anatomy of the Republic,' &c.; and to Baxter's 'Holy Commonwealth,' and part of his 'Key to Catholics.' Rogers was not destitute of parts and learning; but he was one of the most enthusiastic spirits of the excited age in which he lived.

[l] Marchmont Needham was one of the most celebrated political adventurers of the times. He was author of many of the 'Mercuries,' as they were called, which then flew about in all directions, and took all sides of the great political questions which agitated the country. He is said to have been "transcendently gifted in opprobrious and treasonable droll," which he did not scruple to employ on all occasions. Perhaps the pamphlet to which Baxter refers, as written by him, is his 'Discourse of the Excellency of a Free State above a Kingly Government.' 1650.

[m] The book of Bagshaw's referred to is a Latin treatise 'De Monarchia Absolutâ Politica,' &c. 1659. "The arguments in this discourse," says Baxter, "seem to be such poor, injudicious, slender stuff, that it was one occasion of my writing twenty arguments against Democracy, which I put into the book which I have since revoked, 'The Holy Commonwealth.'—*Baxter's Second Admonition to Bagshaw.*

of fools and knaves; and by his gibberish derision persuading men that we deserve no other answer than such scorn and nonsense as beseemeth fools. With most insolent pride he carried it, as if neither I nor any ministers understood at all what policy was, but prated against we knew not what, and had presumed to speak against other men's art, which *he* was master of, and his knowledge, to such idiots as we, incomprehensible.[n] This made me think it fit, having given that general hint against his 'Oceana,' to give a more particular charge, and withal to give the world and him an account of my political principles, and to show what I held as well as what I denied; which I did in that book called 'Holy Commonwealth,' as contrary to his heathenish commonwealth. In which I pleaded the cause of monarchy as better than democracy and aristocracy; but as under God the universal monarch. Here Bishop Morley hath his matter of charge against me, of which one part is that I spake against unlimited monarchy, because God himself hath limited all monarchs. If I had said that laws limit monarchs, I might, amongst some men, be thought a traitor and inexcusable; but to say that God limiteth monarchs, I thought had never before been chargeable with treason, or opposed by any that believed that there is a God. If they are indeed unlimited in respect of God, we have many Gods or no God. But now it is dangerous to meddle with these matters, most men say, Let God defend himself.

"In the end of this book is an appendix concerning the cause of the parliament's first war, which was thus occasioned: Sir Francis Nethersole, a religious knight, who was against the lawfulness of the war on both sides, sent his man to me with letters to advise me to tell Cromwell of his usurpation, and to counsel him to call in the king; of which, when I had given him satisfaction, he sent him again with more letters and books to convince me of the unlawfulness of the Parliament's war, and others attempting it at the same time, and the confusion, which the army had brought upon us, being such as made me very much disposed to think ill of those beginnings which had no better an end, I thought it best to publish my detestation

[n] Baxter could scarcely expect any other treatment than he here describes from such men as Harrington. Politics was the element in which such men lived and breathed—the field which they considered their own. They regarded Baxter as leaving his proper business and meddling with theirs, when he wrote on government, and were therefore disposed to say in banter, "Ne sutor ultra crepidam," instead of reasoning with him.

and lamentation for those rebellious proceedings of the army; which I did as plainly as could be borne, both in an epistle to them, and in a meditation at the end. I withal declared the very truth, that hereby I was made suspicious and doubtful of the beginnings or first cause, but yet was not able to answer the arguments which the lawyers of the Parliament then gave, and which had formerly inclined me to that side. I confessed that if men's miscarriages and ill accidents would warrant me to condemn the beginnings which were for another cause, then I should have condemned them; but that not being the way, I found myself yet unable to answer the first reasons, and therefore laid them down together, desiring the help of others to answer them, professing my own suspicion, and my daily prayers to God for just satisfaction. And this paper is it that containeth all my crimes."[o]

Such is Baxter's own account of this work many years after its publication. Beside the preface and conclusion, it contains three hundred and eighty theses, or aphorisms, each of which is illustrated at more or less length: beginning with, "There are men inhabiting the earth," and ending with "A prudent godly prince is so rare, that the people who enjoy such, ought greatly to love, obey, and honour him." The space between these very evident points is filled up with a multitude of discussions, some more and others less interesting. On many of the subjects which he discusses, Baxter had enlightened views. He was the friend of civil liberty, and an enemy to despotism and arbitrary power. On both these subjects he occasionally wrote well. He seems also to have understood the great end and design of government to be, the good of the governed; and describes more accurately than might have been expected, the nature of the British constitution. On the magistrates' power or authority in matters of religion, he was at fault, and writes like a person who imperfectly understood the subject. He would never have been a persecutor himself, but he saw no objection that men should be compelled to submit, for their own good, in what he regarded as lesser matters. This, however, is very dangerous ground to occupy.

The most obnoxious part of the book, at the time which followed its publication, is the conclusion, where he defends the doctrine of resistance to illegal and oppressive governments, and justifies the war on the part of the people of England against

[o] Life, part i. pp. 118, 119.

the king. The following passages state the principal grounds of his opinion, in which, whatever reproach he had to endure at the time, every friend of the British constitution now agrees with him.

"The laws in England are above the king: because they are not his acts alone, but the acts of king and parliament conjunctly, who have the legislative, that is, the sovereign power. This is confessed by the king in the answer to the nineteen propositions. The king was to execute judgment according to these laws, by his judges in his courts of justice: and his parliament was his highest court, where his personal will and word were not sufficient authority to suspend or cross the judgment of the court, except in some particular cases submitted to him. The people's rights were evidently invaded: ship-money and other impositions were without law, and so without authority. The new oath imposed by the convocation and the king, the ejecting and punishing ministers for not reading the Book of Sports on the Lord's-days, for not bowing towards the altar, for preaching lectures, and twice on the Lord's-day; with many the like, were without law, and so without authority.

"The parliament did remonstrate to the kingdom, the danger of the subversion of its religion and liberties, and of the common good and interest of the people, whose trustees they were: and we were obliged to believe them both as the most competent witnesses and judges, and the chosen trustees of our liberties. We are ourselves incapable of a full discovery of such dangers till it be too late to remedy them: and therefore the constitution of the government having made the parliament the trustees of our liberties, hath made them our eyes by which we must discern our dangers, or else they had been useless to us. The former proceedings afforded us so much experience as made the parliament's remonstrance credible. We saw the king raise forces against the parliament; having forsaken it, and first sought to seize upon its members in a way which he confessed a breach of its privilege. All the king's counsellors and soldiers were subjects, and legally under the power of the parliament. It had power to try any subject, and adjudge them to punishment for their crimes. The offenders whom it would have judged, fled from justice to the king, and there defended themselves by force.

"When the parliament commanded us to obey them, and not resist them, I knew not how to resist and disobey them,

without violation of the command of God, "Let every soul be subject to the higher power," &c.; and without incurring the danger of the condemnation there threatened to resisters. I think none doubts but that command obliged Christians to obey the senate as well as the emperor. When it was confessed by the king that the legislative power was in the three estates conjunct, and the estate was mixed, and consequently that the parliament had a part in the sovereignty, I thought it treason to resist them, as the enemy did, apparently, in order to their subversion; and unlawful to disobey their just commands, such as I thought these were.

"I had great reason to believe that if the king had conquered the parliament, the nation had lost all security of their liberties, and been at his mercy, and not merely under his government; and that if he had conquered them by such persons as he then employed, it had not been in his power to have preserved the commonweath if he would. His impious and popish armies would have ruled him, and used him as other armies have done those that trusted them.

"I knew that the parliament was the representative body of the people of the commonwealth, who are the subject of the common good; that the common good is the essential end of government, and therefore that it cannot be a just war that, by their king, is made against them, except in certain excepted cases: and that the end being more excellent than the means, is to be preserved by us, and by no means to stand in competition with the end. And, therefore, if I had known that the parliament had been the beginners, and most in fault, yet the ruin of our trustees and representatives, and so of all the security of the nation, is a punishment greater than any fault of theirs against a king can deserve; and that their faults cannot disoblige me from defending the Commonwealth. I owned not all that ever they did; but I took it to be my duty to look to the main end. I knew that the king had all his power for the common good, and therefore that no cause can warrant him to make the commonwealth the party which he shall exercise hostility against. War against the parliament, especially by such an army, in such a cause, is hostility against them, and so against the commonwealth. All this seemed plain to me: and especially when I knew how things went before, and who were the agents, and how they were minded, and what were their purposes against the people." [p]

[p] Holy Commonwealth, pp. 470, 472, 474, 477, 478, 480, 481.

I doubt greatly whether, by any man of his own or o. the present age, a clearer exposition could be given of the justifying causes of the civil war than these extracts furnish. They afford an admirable specimen of the clear view which Baxter had of the great question which so long distracted the country, and sufficiently account for his own conduct and that of many others in these painful transactions. While many circumstances compelled him to review the past, his mind never underwent any material change on those points. In the following passage, after having noticed the faults which had been committed on both sides, and some reasons of regret peculiar to himself, he avows his deliberate conviction of the righteousness of the cause, and declares what would be his future conduct under similar circumstances.

"I shall continue with self-suspicion to search, and be glad of any information that may convince me if I have been mistaken; and I make it my daily earnest prayer to God that he will not suffer me to live or die impenitently, or without the discovery of my sin, if I have sinned in this matter. Could I be convinced of it, I would as gladly make a public recantation as I would eat or drink; and I think I can say that I am truly willing to know the truth. But yet I cannot see that I was mistaken in the main cause, or dare repent of it, nor forbear the same, if it were to do again in the same state of things. I should do all I could to prevent such a war; but if it could not be prevented, I must take the same side as then I did. And my judgment tells me that if I should do otherwise, I should be guilty of treason or disloyalty against the sovereign power of the land, of perfidiousness to the commonwealth, of preferring offending subjects before the laws and justice, the will of the king above the safety of the commonwealth, and consequently above his own welfare; and that I should be guilty of giving up the land to blood, or to much worse, under pretence of avoiding blood in a necessary defence of all that is dear to us." [q]

'The Holy Commonwealth' was published at a very critical time, just as Richard Cromwell was falling, and before it appeared whether a republic or the old monarchy was to occupy his place. "It was written," the author tells us, "while the Lord Protector, prudently, piously, faithfully, to his immortal honour, did exercise the government." Unfortunately, with Richard fell the liberties of England for many a year; and the powers that

[q] Holy Commonwealth, pp. 486, 487.

came to be, took care to remember the alleged sins of Baxter committed in this work. It was often quoted against him, and its sentiments greatly misrepresented. Among others, it was attacked by Thomas Tomkins, a high-church clergyman, and a decided opposer of toleration and the privileges of the dissenters after the Restoration, in his 'Rebel's Plea examined; or, Mr. Baxter's Judgment concerning the late War.' 1660. 4to. Tomkins was the nephew of an old acquaintance of Baxter, a prebendary at Worcester, where he was a schoolboy when Baxter lived in the county. After writing this book he was created a doctor, and made chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Baxter says, his 'Rebel's Plea' "was a confutation of such passages in his 'Holy Commonwealth,' as he least understood, and could make most odious."[r] This is not the only book which Tomkins wrote against the Nonconformists. He was author of 'The Inconveniencies of Toleration; or the Modern Pleas of Toleration considered;' a book on which Baxter bestows some animadversions in his 'Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry.' The author was in high esteem with Sheldon, who made him rector of Lambeth, and conferred on him other preferments.[s]

Beside this direct attack, all the political adversaries of Baxter, such as Morley,[t] L'Estrange, Long, and others, took occasion to reproach him for the sentiments of this book. At last, in company with some of the writings of Owen, Locke, and other friends of British freedom, it was consigned to the fire by a decree of the University of Oxford. This reflected honour rather than disgrace on Baxter; and was in due time, as has been mentioned elsewhere, amply avenged on the time-serving body which thus dishonoured itself.

Long before that time, however, in consequence of the incessant attacks made upon him,[u] on account of this work,

[r] Life, part ii. p. 374.

[s] Athen. Oxon. vol. iii. p. 1047.

[t] Bishop Morley declares that it was on account of the sentiments avowed in the 'Holy Commonwealth' he refused to allow Baxter to preach in his diocese; and that he told him so when he waited on him to obtain permission to resume his labours at Kidderminster: which he alleges Baxter concealed. This does no credit to the bishop; and only shows how dangerous it then was for a man to preach the Gospel, or be a friend to the liberties of his country.—See the *Bishop of Winchester's Vindication.*

[u] One of the most furious attacks made on Baxter, in which the 'Holy Commonwealth' is referred to, was by a person of the name of Edward Pettit, M.A., in a work entitled 'Visions of Government,' published in 1684. After misrepresenting the principles, and calumniating the character, of Baxter, he

he published at the end of the preface to his 'Life of Faith,' printed in 1670, his regret for having published the book, and recalls it. The document is very curious, and failed to answer its purpose. The *scripta manet* was too powerful for Baxter's declaration of *non scriptum*. "Let the reader know," he says, "that whereas the bookseller hath in the catalogue of my books, named my 'Holy Commonwealth, or Political Aphorisms,' I do hereby recall the said book, and profess my repentance that ever I published it, and that not only for some bye-passages, but in respect of the secondary part of the very scope; though the first part of it, which is the defence of God and reason, I recant not. But this revocation I make with these provisoes: that I reverse not all the matter of the book, nor all that more than one have accused, as *e. g.* the assertion that all human powers are limited by God; and if I may not be pardoned for not defying Deity and humanity, I shall prefer that ignominy before their present triumph and *fastus*, who defy them:[x] that I make not this recantation to the military

puts into the mouth of Bradshaw,—whom he infamously represents as president of hell, bestowing the crown on Baxter, in a contest between him, Hobbes, and Neville, for pre-eminence,—the following invective: "If he, whose faith is faction, whose religion is rebellion, whose prayers are spells, whose piety is magic, whose purity is the gall of bitterness, who can cant and recant and cant again, who can transform himself into as many shapes as Lucifer, (who is never more a devil than when an angel of light, and like him, who, proud of his perfections, first rebelled in heaven,) proud of his imaginary graces, pretends to rule and govern, and consequently rebel on earth, be the greatest politician, then make room for Mr. Baxter. Let him come in and be crowned with wreaths of serpents, and chaplets of adders; let his triumphant chariot be a pulpit, drawn on the wheels of cannon by a brace of wolves in sheep's clothing; let the ancient fathers of the church, whom, out of ignorance, he has vilified; the reverend and learned prelates, whom, out of pride and malice, he has abused, belied, and persecuted; the most righteous king, whose murder, (I speak my own and his sense,) contrary to the light of all religion, laws, reason, and conscience, he has justified, then denied, then again and again and again justified; let them all be bound in chains to attend his infernal triumph to his 'Saint's Everlasting Rest;' then make room, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, Atheists, and politicians, for the greatest rebel on earth, and next to him that fell from heaven."—Of the author of this malignant production I can give no account. Beside his 'Visions of Government,' from which this extract is given, I have two other books of his, 'The Vision of Purgatory,' 1620, and 'The Visions of the Reformation,' 1683. They all discover marks of genius, though they leave it difficult to divine the true character of their author. In an engraved title to the 'Visions of Government,' Charles II. is represented trampling on a monster with three heads—the Grand Turk, the Pope, and a Presbyterian. The head of the Presbyterian is evidently intended for Richard Baxter!

[x] In this passage Baxter alludes particularly to Bishop Morley, who vindicated himself from the charge of being "a defier of Deity and humanity."

fury and rebellious pride and tumult against which I wrote it, nor would have them hence take any encouragement for impenitence: that though I dislike the Roman clergy's writing so much of politics, and detest ministers meddling in state matters, without necessity or a certain call; yet I hold it not simply unbeseeming a divine, to expound the fifth commandment, nor to show the dependence of human powers on the divine, nor to instruct subjects to obey with judgment and for conscience' sake: that I protest against the judgment of posterity, and all others that were not of the same time and place, as to the mental censure either of the book or revocation, as being ignorant of the true reasons of them both. Which things provided, I hereby under my hand, as much as in me lieth, reverse the book, and desire the world to take it as *non scriptum*." [y]

The reasons which influenced him to take this singular step, he assigns very openly and candidly in the following passage of his Life: "Ever since the king came in, that book of mine was preached against before the king, spoken against in the parliament, and wrote against by such as desired my ruin. Morley, bishop of Worcester, and many after him, branded it with treason, and the king was still told that I would not retract it, but was still of the same mind, ready to raise another war; and a person not to be endured. New books every year came out against it; and even men that had been taken for sober and religious, when they had a mind for preferment, and to be taken notice of at court and by the prelates, did fall on preaching or writing against me, and especially against this book, as the most probable means to accomplish their ends. When I had endured this ten years, and found no stop, but that still they proceeded to make me odious to the king and kingdom, and seeking my utter ruin this way, I thought it my duty to remove this stumbling-block out of their way, and without recanting any particular doctrine in it, to revoke the book and disown it, desiring the reader to take it as *non scriptum*, and telling him

Had the bishop's notions of the divine character been more correct, and his political theology more accordant with the Bible, he would have been less known at court, and would not have gloried in depriving Richard Baxter of a license to preach the Gospel.

[y] Bishop Morley makes some very severe strictures on this recantation, as well as on the 'Holy Commonwealth' itself. He considers, with some justice, that the recantation is very equivocal, and affords little evidence that Baxter had changed his mind. To a man of his high-church principles it necessarily appeared very unsatisfactory.—See the *Conclusion of his Vindication*, pp. 1—15.

that I repented of the writing of it. And so I did, yet telling him that I retracted none of the doctrine of the first part, which was to prove the monarchy of God: but for the sake of the whole second part, I repented that I wrote it; for I was resolved, at least, to have this much to say against all that after wrote, and preached, and talked against it, that I had revoked that book, and therefore should not defend it. The incessant bloody malice of the reproachers made me heartily wish, on two or three accounts, that I had never written it; because it was done just at the fall of the government, and was buried in our ruins, and never that I know of did any great good; because I find it best for ministers to meddle, as little as may be, with matters of polity, how great soever their provocations may be: and therefore I wish that I had never written on any such subject. I repented also that I meddled against Vane and Harrington, which was the second part in defence of monarchy, seeing that the consequents had been no better, and that my reward had been to be silenced, imprisoned, turned out of all, and reproached implacably and incessantly as criminal, and never like to see an end of it. He that had wrote for so little, and so great displeasure, might be tempted, as well as I, to wish that he had sat still, and let God and man alone, with matters of civil polity. Though I was not convinced of many errors in that book, so called by some accusers, yet I repented the writing of it as an infelicity, and as that which did no good, but hurt."[x]

Various opinions will be entertained of this singular mode of recalling a printed work; and it may seem improper, in the face of Baxter's own protest against the judgment of posterity, respecting both the book and its revocation, to pronounce any opinion on the matter. But all such protests are vain; what is published is public property, and no man has a right, after publishing a book, to protest against others forming or expressing an opinion of it. It does not appear that Baxter ever changed his mind respecting the substance of the sentiments of his 'Holy Commonwealth,' but he regretted their publication, as he became thereby involved in disputes which were foreign from the nature of his principal occupation, and exposed himself to reproach, which, as a minister of Christ, he would rather have avoided. It might, perhaps, have been better had the book not been published, but that being done, it is to be regretted he

[x] Life, part iii. pp. 71, 72.

should have thus recalled it. It contains nothing of which he had any reason to be ashamed. The passages of it most objected to, are the parts which of all others are most creditable to the judgment and feelings of Baxter; and respecting which there is now scarcely any difference of opinion in this enlightened country. I will not, however, defend the political consistency of Baxter. In these passages, he avows principles and approves of conduct not reconcilable with his opposition to the doctrines of Hooker, on which I have remarked in another chapter. And, indeed, in the 'Holy Commonwealth' itself, there are positions that it would be impracticable to harmonize. Considering also what part he acted in connexion with the army of the commonwealth, and the defence which he makes of his own conduct, he ought to have been more sparing in his censures of others who, in these affairs, do not appear to have acted differently from himself, or to have been influenced in their conduct by motives less pure or patriotic.[a]

In 1680, Baxter published his 'Church History of the Government of Bishops, and their Councils Abbreviated.' This is a quarto volume of more than 500 pages, and, though chiefly a compilation, must have cost the author very considerable labour. It contains an account of the leading transactions of Christian princes and popes, and of the principal heresies and controversies till the Reformation. Its object is to inform the ignorant of the state of the ancient churches, and to correct many mistakes and misconceptions that prevail respecting the heresies of former times, and the means employed to destroy or promote them.

[a] Baxter tells a curious anecdote respecting Dr. South in connexion with his 'Holy Commonwealth.' "Bishop Morley having preferred a young man named Mr. S— orator of the University of Oxford, a fluent, witty satirist, and one that was some time mentioned to me to be my curate at Kidderminster; this man, being household chaplain to the lord chancellor, was appointed to preach before the king, where the crowd had high expectations of some vehement satire. But when he had preached a quarter of an hour he was utterly at a loss, and so unable to recollect himself, that he could go no further, but cried 'The Lord be merciful to our infirmities,' and so came down. About a month after, they were resolved yet that Mr. S— should preach the same sermon before the king, and not lose his expected applause; and preach it he did, little more than half an hour, with no admiration at all of the hearers; and, for his encouragement, the sermon was printed. When it was printed, many desired to see what words they were that he was stopped at the first time, and they found in the printed copy all that he had said first, and one of the next passages, which he was to have delivered, was against me for my 'Holy Commonwealth.'"—*Life*, part ii. p. 350.

Ecclesiastical history is a very important branch of study, but one which is attended with many difficulties. The widely-spread and diversified circumstances of the Christian church, even from the earliest period, render it difficult to arrive at satisfactory views of many events in which it was concerned. Those events were seldom recorded at the time, or by the persons who lived on the spot. The early writers who undertook to give the history of the church, were not well skilled in the laws of historic truth and evidence, nor always well fitted to apply those laws. Opinions and statements scattered over the pages of the fathers and their successors, are often vague, discordant, and unsatisfactory, presenting almost endless perplexity, or matter of debate. While these and other causes contribute to render ecclesiastical history very difficult, they who have devoted themselves to it in modern times, look at the subjects of their investigation through mediums which tend to colour or distort most of the facts passing under their review. Their associations and habits of thinking lead them unconsciously to attach modern ideas to ancient terms and usages. The word church, for instance, almost invariably suggests the idea of a body allied to the state, and holding the orthodox creed. The heretics of church history are generally regarded as men of erroneous principles and immoral lives. Councils are bodies representative, and clothed with something approaching to infallible authority. Bishops are not regarded as pastors of particular congregations, but ecclesiastical rulers of provinces. All these things tend greatly to bewilder and perplex an inquirer into the true state of the profession of Christianity during a long succession of ages; and from their distracting influence, even the strongest minds can scarcely be protected. Impartiality is commonly professed, and, in most instances, honestly intended, but very rarely exercised.

That Baxter should be altogether free from prejudice is not to be supposed. But as he held with none of the great leading parties of his own day on the subject of church government, he was as likely as most men to ascertain the truth; while total regardlessness of the influence which his discoveries or their promulgation might have upon his own circumstances, must have operated powerfully in securing an honest declaration of truth.[1]

[1] In the introduction Baxter alludes to Dr. Heylin's unjust aspersions on the Presbyterians, and his seeming unconcern about the shedding of blood; which

His representation of the reason for undertaking this publication, and especially the testimony he bears respecting the chief causes of the evils and contentions which have afflicted the Christian church, are exceedingly important.

"I found by the people of London, that many, influenced by the late confusions in this land, had got an apprehension that all schism and disorder came from ministers and people resisting the bishops, and that prelacy is the means to cure schism; so that seeing what church tyranny hath done in the world, they fly to it for refuge against that mischief which it doth principally introduce. Wherefore I wrote the history of prelacy, or a contraction of all the history of the church, especially Binnius and Baronius, and others, of councils; to show by the testimony of their greatest flatterers what the councils and contentions of prelates have done. But the history, even as delivered by Binnius himself, was so ugly and frightful to me in the perusing, that I was afraid lest it should prove, when opened by me, a temptation to some to contemn Christianity itself for the sake and crimes of such a clergy. As an antidote, therefore, I prefixed the due commendation of the better, humble sort of pastors. But I must profess that the history of prelacy and councils, doth assure me that all the schisms and confusions that have been caused by Anabaptists, Separatists, or any of the popular, unruly sectaries, have been but as flea-bitings to the church, in comparison of the wounds that prelatical usurpation, contention, and heresies, have caused. I am so far from wondering that all Baronius's industry was thought necessary to put the best visor on such actions, that I wonder the Papists have not rather employed all their wit, care, and power, to get the histories of councils burnt and forgotten in the world; that they might have only their own oral, flexible tradition to deliver to mankind; what their interest, *pro re nata*, shall require."[c]

The first part of the work, in which he gives an account of the primitive churches, showing most satisfactorily that they were single congregations under the government of their respective pastors or bishops; with the rise of diocesan episcopacy, and the progress of corruption, till Christianity became amalgamated

brought upon him a fierce rejoinder from Vernon, in his preface to Heylin's Life, with the repetition of the story of Baxter's killing a man, as the evidence of his bloody disposition; and some remarks on the church history.

[c] Life, part iii. pp. 181, 182.

with secular things and placed under the power of civil government, is the most important.

The views and reasonings contained in this portion of the work, are fully supported by the best authorities. I regret that my limits render it impracticable to make quotations: and to follow him through his account of popes and councils, would be unprofitable. As far as they are concerned, church history is little better than a record of human depravity and impiety under the name of religion. It is an almost unbroken exhibition of the lust and abuse of power—of irreligious arrogance and domination—of the worst passions of human nature, seeking their gratification, and displaying their most malignant qualities, in combination with a pretended regard to the interests of the pure and holy religion of Jesus.

This work of our indefatigable author did not pass without animadversion. It was attacked by a clergyman named Morrice or Maurice, chaplain to Archbishop Sancroft, in an anonymous work, entitled 'A Vindication of the Primitive Church Diocesan Episcopacy: in answer to Mr. Baxter's Church History, as also to some parts of his Treatise of Episcopacy.' 1682. 8vo. The great object of this work is to shake the authority of Baxter's statements, and to vindicate the bishops from what is laid to their charge. This led Baxter to write and publish his 'True History of Councils Enlarged and Defended.' 1682. 4to. This work is written with very considerable vigour and spirit, and is in some respects more interesting than the former. Baxter was stung and roused by some of the reproaches and misrepresentations of his adversary, and defends himself exceedingly well. He was accused of want of learning, and of want of accuracy; of misquoting and mistranslating his authorities. The following extract contains a piece of his own history, as well as a view of the extent of his reading, and of the authorities which he used; it is therefore curious:

"Seeing these things are thought just matter for our accuser's turn, I will crave the reader's patience while I tell him the truth. It is now about twenty-five years since I read the German history in the collections of Freherus, Reuberus, and Pistorius, and about thirty years since I read the collections of Goldastus. The Magdeburgers, Osiander, Sleidan, or any such Protestants, I thought vain to allege to Papists. About seven or eight years ago, I was accused for preaching, and fined by Sir Thomas Davis; and the warrant was sent by him to Sir

Edmund Bury Godfrey, to levy it on me by distress. I had no way to avoid it, but *bonâ fide* to make away all that I had. Among the rest, I made away my library; only borrowing part of it for my use. I purposed to have given it almost all to Cambridge, in New England; but Mr. Thomas Knowles, who knew their library, told me that Sir Kenelme Digby had already given them the Fathers, Councils, and Schoolmen, and that it was history and commentators which they wanted. Whereupon I sent them some of my commentators, and some historians, among which were, Freherus', Reuberus', and Pistorius' collections; and Nauclerus, Sabellicus, Thuanus, Jos. Scaliger, &c. Goldastus I kept by me, (as borrowed,) and many more which I could not spare; the fathers, councils, and schoolmen, I was stopped from sending. Now, whether I was unacquainted with those that partly stand yet at my elbow, and which I had read so long ago, must depend on the credit of my memory; which, I confess, of late has grown weak: but not so weak as to think that Marquardus Freherus was not one man, and a Palatinate Councillor, though it be names that I most forget. Why I gave not the christian names of Reuberus and Pistorius, whether because I forgot them, or because I minded not so small a thing, not dreaming what would be inferred from it, I remember not. But when I wrote that abridgment, I made use of none that I thought the Papists would except against. For the first ages, I gathered what I remembered out of the Fathers, and out of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Evagrius, Theodoret, the Tripartite, Nicephorus, Liberatus, Brev. Victor Vtic, Bede, and such others as are by them received. Beside which, I principally followed and epitomized Binnius and Crab, and partly Baronius, with Platina, Onuphrius Panunius, Stella, Petavius, and others of their own. I resolved I would not so much as open Goldastus, or any Protestant collector, that they might not except against their credit, and reject them as malicious, cursed heretics. Therefore, even those histories which be in Goldastus, I would not take as out of him, but some of them from the books published by others, and some as cited by Binnius, Petavius, or other such: and this is now the proof of my vanity.

"He accuseth me for not using Valesius' edition of Eusebius, and those editions of the councils which he accounteth the best. To which I say, I am not rich enough to buy them, nor can keep them if I had them. Must none write but rich men? The French councils would cost more than many of us

are worth. We have had no ecclesiastical maintenance these nineteen years, and we cannot keep the books we have.

"As for my using Hanmer's translation of Eusebius and Socrates, my case was as before described. Valesius I had not; Grynæus I made use of heretofore. But since I was, by constraint, deprived both of my books and money to buy more, when I wrote that abridgment, I had only Hanmer's translation left me: and if that sort of men who forced me to give away my books, to keep them from being distrained on, will make use of this to prove me ignorant of them, the matter is very small to me.

"If you say I should not then have written, I answer, Could they so have silenced us in the pulpit, they had more answered their own judgment than mine. I had no use for critics, nor for any thing in Eusebius and Socrates that depends on the credit of the translator." [d]

There is something very stinging in this and some other passages of the present work, as applied to the party by whom Baxter was chiefly opposed. His defence of himself against the other misrepresentations of this author, which refer both to his work and to himself, are, in general, very satisfactory, but do not require to be gone into.

In the preface to this work, he gives some account of Job Ludolph's 'History of Ethiopia.' He then, in reply to L'Estrange, gives a specimen of the readiest method of confuting Mr. Baxter, by noticing the story of his killing a man, adding the true account of that affair, which has been given in the first part of these memoirs. Annexed to the work is an admirable anonymous pamphlet, by Mr. David Clarkson, 'Diocesan Churches not yet Discovered in Primitive Times; or, a Defence of the Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet.' Clarkson is well known as the colleague and successor of Dr. Owen. On this occasion, Baxter and he, though an Independent, wrote in conjunction. They were agreed on the main points in dispute, viz., that diocesan episcopacy was not the primitive form of church government, but a departure from it. Clarkson was a man of great piety and moderation, and of more accurate learning than Baxter, though far from equal to him in acuteness and controversial talents. [e]

[d] 'True History of Councils Defended,' pp. 56—59.

[e] Wood (Athen. Oxon. vol. iv. p. 328) says Clarkson afterwards disowned this book, though on what authority he does not say. He afterwards pub-

Baxter also speaks, on his title-page, of a detection of the false history of Edward, Lord Bishop of Cork and Ross, in Ireland. He refers to a publication of Bishop Wetenhall's, entitled, 'The Protestant Peace-Maker,' published in 1682; in a postscript to which are some notes on several of Baxter's writings for peace. His lordship evidently did not understand the subject on which he wrote. His strictures are feeble, and undeserving of the attention which Baxter bestowed on them. The two works on church history, which we have now noticed, with the treatise on episcopacy, are among the best of Baxter's writings, which have not been re-published, and well deserve the attention of inquirers into the affairs of the church.[f]

The 'Breviat of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter, with some account of her mother, Mrs. Hanmer,' was published shortly after Mrs. Baxter's death, in 1681. Of this little work considerable use has already been made, in noticing Baxter's marriage, and his wife's death. Of Mrs. Baxter it is unnecessary again to speak; she possessed great piety, energy, and benevolence, and was peculiarly fitted to be the wife of such a man. His account of her is full of affection, very minute, and very faithful; as it records some of her failings, as well as her virtues. It is strikingly characteristic of the author. He mentions in the preface, that in his wife's will he was particularly requested to re-print five hundred copies of the funeral sermon for her mother, written in 1661, which leads him to give some account of his writing the biographical sketch of his wife and of some other individuals of his family.

"Being thus obliged, by her request, mine own affections urged me to premise this Breviat of her own Life; written, I

lished a very admirable tract, 'Primitive Episcopacy stated and cleared from the Holy Scriptures and Ancient Records.' 1688. 8vo. To this work Maurice, then a Dr., published an answer, in a 'Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy.' 1691. 8vo. Dr. Maurice was a person of very considerable learning, of which he seems sufficiently sensible in his controversy with Baxter.

[f] There is one fact mentioned in his 'True History of Councils Defended,' which ought to be mentioned. It throws some light on the charge of persecuting the Episcopalians, preferred against Cromwell and his party. "In the days of the usurpers I moved for a petition, that, when they granted liberty of conscience to so many others, they would grant liberty for the full exercise of the Episcopal government to all that deserved it. *But the Episcopal party that I spake to would not endure it, as knowing what sure liberty would be to their cause, unless they could have the sword to suppress those that yield not to their reasons.*"—p. 131.

confess, under the power of melting grief, and therefore perhaps with the less prudent judgment; but not with the less, but the more truth, for passionate weakness poureth out all, which greater prudence may conceal. Conscionable men's histories are true, but if they be also wise, they tell us but some part of truth; concealing that which would do harm, and which the depraved world cannot bear without abusing it. But we that are less wise tell all the truth, too little regarding how men will receive it.

"And hence comes all history, which hath not evidence equal to natural, to be of less credit than most men think; while bad men lie, and good men leave out so much of the truth, as makes the rest to be as another thing than altogether it would appear.

"And having purposed to write this breviat concerning my dear wife, God having, the same year, taken away two more of my ancient family, I wrote a breviat of their lives also. One was my excellent, holy mother-in-law, Mary the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks, widow to my dear father. She was one of the most humble, mortified, holy persons that ever I knew; and lived in longing to be with Christ, till she was a hundred years old, wanting three or four, in full understanding, and at last rejoicing in the triumphant, frequent hearing, and repeating the ninety-first Psalm.

"The other was my old friend and housekeeper, Jane Matthews, who lived in pious, humble virginity, with eminent worth to about seventy-six or seventy-seven years, and died of mere decay, without considerable pain or sickness, about a month or six weeks before my wife.

"To these I add a fourth, a breviat of the life and death of the worthy mother of my wife, as to the time that I knew her. But I have cast by these latter three, and much of the first, by the counsel of wise friends, as things which they think that strangers will not make so great a matter of, as love and nearness made me do.

"As to these little private histories of mine own family forementioned, I was loth to cast by my own mother-in-law's life, she being a person of extraordinary holiness, living long with Sir Robert Harley, whose lady was her cousin-german; afterwards at Shrewsbury, and after with my father and me, &c., in so great communion with God, contempt of the world, and all its pomp and vanity; so great victory over the

flesh, and so strong desires to die; and especially in such constant, fervent, successful prayer, that had marvellous answers, as very few Christians attain.

"She is gone after many of my choicest friends, who within one year are gone to Christ, and I am following even at the door. Had I been to enjoy them only here, it would have been but a short comfort mixed with the many troubles which all our failings and sins, and some degree of unsuitableness between the nearest and dearest, cause. But I am going after them to that blessed society, where life, light, and love, and therefore harmony, concord, and joy, are perfect and everlasting."

To the Memoir of Mrs. Baxter itself, after the extracts already given, I shall not any further advert. It is an interesting testimony to the character of a beloved and excellent woman, who enjoyed the highest confidence of this man of God, and who devoted herself to promote his comfort and usefulness to the end of her life. He had intended to make his account of her, and of all the circumstances connected with their marriage, much more extended; but was diverted from his purpose by the advice of some judicious friends. His papers on this subject have I suppose been destroyed, which I do not much regret; though they would have gratified curiosity, they might not answer any useful purpose.

Among the historical and biographical writings of Baxter, may be properly classed his 'Penitent Confession, and necessary Vindication.' 1691. 4to. This must have been among the latest of his productions, as a letter prefixed to it, addressed to Bishop Stillingfleet, is dated June 13, 1691. Few men have been subjected to greater or more calumnious misrepresentations than Baxter. To these he was particularly exposed, not only from the public part which he acted, and from his sentiments as a Nonconformist, during a period of great difficulty, but from the promptitude and honesty with which he always avowed and published his convictions, respecting both himself and others. He was a great lover of peace and of his friends; yet he had a still stronger love for truth and the interests of religion. The man who could fearlessly sacrifice himself to what he believed the cause of righteousness required, was not likely to be fastidiously cautious in speaking of the conduct of others, whether friends or foes.

Among his bitterest and most persevering enemies, was one Long, a clergyman of Exeter, who appears to have considered it his duty to hunt down the Nonconformists in general, and Baxter above all others. According to Wood—"He was a person well read in the fathers', in Jewish, and other ancient writings; and much conversant with the works of the more modern authors, as having been well skilled in the writings of the several sorts of English separatists, especially of the Presbyterians. The great danger and destructiveness of their rebellious principles and practices (reducing them into faithful historical narratives from their first origin and source quite down to these times) few, if any, have fully and truly represented in their proper colours, fairly examined, or more clearly refuted and set out. He hath also undergone that very toilsome drudgery of reading many or most of Mr. Richard Baxter's books, and hath published reflections and animadversions on several of them."[g]

This violent individual, after attacking several of Baxter's controversial pieces, to which reference is elsewhere made, vented his full malignity in an anonymous volume, imputed to him by Baxter, and which he afterwards acknowledged. 'The Unreasonableness of Separation, the second part; or, a further impartial Account of the History, Nature, and Pleas of the present Separation from the Church of England, with special Remarks on the Life and Actions of Mr. Richard Baxter.' 1681. 8vo. The zeal and labour employed in getting up this book are quite extraordinary, in order to show that Baxter was a bad man, and a great heretic. His life and writings must have been ransacked in the most assiduous manner, to furnish the mis-statements and mis-representations with which the book abounds. To investigate their nature, and expose their injustice, would fill up a volume. Happily, it is not necessary to the just and fair reputation of Baxter; that has outlived the abuse and the very memory of Long; who is now known only to the curious in the history of those times as the calumniator of Owen and Baxter, the defender of High-Church principles in religion, and of passive obedience in politics. That he was a man not altogether destitute of talents, is evident even from his mischievous books; but talents, however great, when prostituted to evil purposes, and employed in opposing or vilifying men of principle and integrity,

[g] Athen. Oxon. vol. iv. p. 485.

ultimately bring upon their possessor the displeasure of God, and the indignation of men.[h]

Baxter wrote an answer to this scurrilous production at the time; but delayed its publication till he received in 1691 an anonymous letter, signed "*Cantianus De Minimis*," calling him to repent and to publish his Confessions like Augustine. Baxter printed this letter at the end of one prefixed to his Confession, addressed to Stillingfleet, and thanks the writer,

[h] The only part of Long's book, which it is worth while to quote, is the conclusion, which he calls a characteristic epitaph of Baxter. It will illustrate, better than any thing I could say, Long's vituperative character:—

Hic jacet Richardus Baxter,
Theologus Armatus,
Loiolita Reformatus,
Hæresiarcha Ærianus,
Schismaticorum Antisignanus;
Cujus pruritus disputandi peperit,
Scriptitandi cacoethes nutrivit,
Predicandi zelus intemperatus maturavit,
ECCLESIÆ SCABIEM:
Qui dissentit ab iis quibuscum consentit maximè;
Tum sibi cum aliis Nonconformis,
Præteritis, præsentibus, et futuris;
Regum et Episcoporum Juratus hostis,
Ipsumq; Rebellium solenne fœdus;
Qui natus erat, per septuaginta Annos
Et Octogintâ Libros,
Ad perturbandas Regni Respublicas,
Et ad bis perdendam Ecclesiam *Anglicanam*;
Magnis tamen excidit ausis:
Deo Gratias.

The following is a translation of this effusion of malice and wickedness:—Here lies Richard Baxter, a militant divine, a reformed Jesuit, a brasen heresiarch, and chief of the schismatics; whose itch of disputing begat, whose humour of writing nourished, and whose intemperate zeal in preaching brought to its utmost height, the leprosy of the church: who dissented from those with whom he most agreed, from himself as well as from all other Nonconformists, past, present, and to come; the sworn enemy of kings and bishops, and in himself the very bond of rebels; who was born, through seventy years and eighty books, to disturb the peace of the kingdom, and twice to attempt the ruin of the Church of England; in the endeavour of which mighty mischiefs he fell short. Thanks be to God.

It was the fashion to write epitaphs for Baxter; another scurrilous enemy proposed to write over his tomb the two lines which are mangled in the last part of the above—

"Hic situs est BAXTER, currus auriga paterni,
Quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis."

—*Young's Anti-Baxterianæ.*

The above quotations justify the remark of Granger, "Baxter's enemies have placed him in hell;" that candid and spirited writer, however, justly adds, "but every man that has not ten times the bigotry that Baxter himself had, must conclude that he is in a better place."—*Biog. Hist.* vol. v. p. 61.

though unknown to him, for giving him the opportunity of professing his repentance. The greater part of the letter would demand to be quoted, did the limits of this work admit of it, as illustrative of the spirit of Baxter, and explanatory of his designs in writing his Confession.

After this excellent prefatory letter, he proceeds to give some account of the necessity of repentance, and of the things for which others blamed him, but for which he did not blame himself. He then reviews many particulars in his life and writings, defending, extenuating, explaining, or retracting, as matters seemed to require. As the statements, in connexion with his own life, have been often used in this work, this pamphlet requires no further notice. It is a singular evidence of the integrity, tenderness of conscience, and regardlessness of the applause or censure of men, for which Baxter was so remarkable.

The last work in this department remaining to be noticed, is the largest, and, at the same time, the most important of all. 'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ: Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most memorable passages of his Life and Times, faithfully published from his own original manuscript, by the Rev. Matthew Sylvester.' fol. 1686. Of a work, the most valuable parts of which have been incorporated in this volume, the reader will not expect to be furnished with a detailed description in this place. A few particulars, however, are necessary to be stated.

It contains an account of Baxter, from his birth, in 1615, to the year 1684; including his personal transactions, or private life, his ministerial life, and his views of the great public affairs of his times. It is divided into three parts: the first extending from his birth to the time of the Commonwealth; and including some occurrences which happened afterwards. The second goes back to the Westminster Assembly, and to the civil wars, and concludes with the year 1665, at the time of the plague in London. The third, which he began to write in 1670, takes up the narrative where it had broken off, and brings it down to about 1684. There is also a large appendix of papers and letters of various degrees of interest.

Considered as an account of Baxter and his times, it is an invaluable document; but it is exceedingly to be regretted that it fell into the hands of so incompetent an editor as Sylvester. He was a very good man, but utterly unfit for the task which was

devolved upon him. Instead of digesting the materials which Baxter had left in the roughest state, he appears to have printed them with all their imperfections, and with scarcely any regard to arrangement. The consequence is, the book is almost unreadable, except for the purpose of consultation; and even that is attended with much difficulty from its disorderly disposition. It is also printed with remarkable inaccuracy, either from the editor or the printer, in numberless places, grossly mistaking the author's meaning, or leaving it unintelligible. The following paragraph from Sylvester's preface, sufficiently justifies what I have now stated.

"As to the author's ordering and digesting of his own memoirs, a rhapsody it now appears; and as to method and equality of style, somewhat below what curious readers might expect: yea, and from what it had been, had it but passed the author's stricter thoughts and view. Yet we shall find the history greatly useful, though not exactly uniform; nor is it so confused as to be incapable of easy references, and reductions to such proper order as may best please the reader, if the design be clear and worthy, viz., to set in open light the degenerate age he lived in: the *magnalia* of grace and providence as to himself; his self-censurings on all occasions; caution and conduct unto others; and tracing all events to their genuine sources and originals. The judicious reader will improve such things. There were several papers loosely laid, which could not easily be found when needed. And the defectiveness of my very much declining memory made me forget, and the more because of haste and business, where I had laid them after I had found them. Some few papers mentioned, and important here, are not yet found, though searched after, which yet, hereafter, may be brought to light amongst some others intended for the public view, if God permit. The reverend author wrote them at several times, as his other work and studies and frequent infirmities would admit of. He was more intent upon the matter than the method; and finding his evening shadows growing long, as the presage of his own approaching and expected change, he was willing, through the importunity had, rather that the work was done somewhat imperfectly, than not at all. It is true, indeed, that he hath left us nothing of the last seven years of his life, save his apology for his accused 'Paraphrase and Notes on the New Testament;' for which he was so fiercely prosecuted, imprisoned, traduced, and fined.

And though some pressed me to draw up the supplemental history of his life, yet the wisest that I could consult advised me to the contrary; and I did take their counsel to be right and good."

The chief value of this work consists in the faithful portrait which it presents of the excellent and venerable author. It exhibits him at full length, displaying all his greatness, his weaknesses, and his peculiarities. It enables us to live with Baxter, and in Baxter's times. It opens his heart, and enables us to read, without disguise, what was passing there. It opens his chamber door, and discloses the retirement and the privacies of the man of God—holding fellowship with his Maker and Redeemer—mourning over his deficiencies and sins—wrestling in prayer, and rejoicing in hope. It conducts us to his pulpit, and places us almost within reach of the lightening of his eye, and the music of his voice—arresting attention, flashing conviction, penetrating with sorrow, or filling with peace and joy. It introduces us to his flock, and makes us familiar with his pastoral visits, his catechetical labours, his faithful discipline. It places him before us as the centre of an extended circle of correspondents, who looked to him for counsel to guide, for encouragement to act, for comfort to suffer—vigilant, tender, and conscientious. It exhibits him as the patriot, alive to all the wrongs of his country, and endeavouring to redress or mitigate them; ambitious, not of ease, honour, or preferment; and regardless of all personal interests, if he might but promote the public good. It depicts him as the steady and devoted witness and confessor of Christ; enduring wrongfully for his Master's sake, with all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. It is such a book as cannot be read without the deepest interest by all who have any respect for Baxter, for the class of persons to which he belonged, or for the period in which he lived.

Baxter's account of public occurrences, in some of the most important of which he was not merely personally but deeply engaged, must be received with allowance for those mistakes to which the most candid and upright men are liable; and for those prejudices of party and of system, from which it is obvious Baxter was not exempted. Wherever he records what he said or did, or what occurred under his own eye, the fullest dependence may be placed upon his statements. His reasonings on facts may frequently be liable to objection; and

when he speaks of the conduct and principles of others, on the ground of what he heard, we must examine what he says by the established laws of evidence. The period of which he treats did not belong to the ordinary course of the world. There was nothing common-place in its features. Politics, religion, law, government, all assumed new and strange characters. All classes of men were thrown out of their accustomed circumstances and relations, and assumed forms and habits, novel and strange. It was impossible to think, speak, or write, but as partisans. Hence, the difficulty in arriving at true and accurate views of many of the individuals and affairs of those times. Baxter affords important aid; but implicit confidence must not always be placed in his judgment, or in the reports which he received from others. I have introduced every thing important in his narrative, in his own language, making the required verbal and grammatical corrections; but I have frequently corrected his statements and disputed his reasonings in the notes. Justice to Baxter required that I should faithfully record his views; justice to truth, and to the light with which we are now furnished, required that I should not suppress my own.

Dr. Calamy has left us, in 'His Own Life,' the following account of this publication, which shows, that had it been under his care, it would have appeared in a more improved form. "This work," he says, "was much expected, and had been long earnestly desired. Mr. Baxter left it, with his other MSS., to the care of his beloved friend, Mr. Sylvester, who was chary of it to the last degree, and not very forward to let it be seen; yet had not leisure enough to peruse and publish it. After some time, I obtained the favour of the MS., and read it over and discoursed with him about the contents with all imaginable freedom. I found the good man counted it a sort of sacred thing to have any hand in making alterations of any sort, in which I could not but apprehend he went too far, and was cramped by a sort of superstition.

"Of this I was the more fully convinced upon my seeing several passages in the MS. that I could perceive likely to do more hurt than good; and being informed, upon inquiry made, that he had a discretionary power left him by his deceased friend, I freely told him some things must be left out, or he would be charged with great weakness. He asked for instances; and I began with Mr. Sylvester's own character, and told him I

could not see how he could, with decency, let that stand, though it was an instance of the author's kindness to him, when he himself was to be the publisher. He seemed surprised and struck, and upon my turning to it and reading it to him, owned that that should be altered, and empowered me to do it. I further mentioned to him some few reflections on persons and families of distinction, which would be offensive, though the matters related were true enough. These, also, he suffered me to blot out. I then fastened on some other things relating to Mr. Baxter himself, about a dream of his, and his bodily disorders, and physical management of himself, and some other things that were too mean, the publishing of which I told him to censure. After a good deal of discourse, he suffered these also to be expunged. The contents prefixed to Mr. Baxter's narrative, and the index at the end, were of my drawing up. For my pains, I had from the booksellers the present of a copy."[1]

Notwithstanding the remarks of Dr. Calamy, Sylvester brought out the Life in a most unfinished state; and full of the sort of gossip, and tiresome digressions, which he had been entreated to omit. Even the index, drawn up by Calamy, reflects little credit on his skill or industry; being not more correct or complete than the work itself.

Of this work, Calamy justly observes, "It met with the same treatment, as Baxter in his lifetime was much used to, both as to his person and his writings. It has been valued by some, and as much slighted by others. But where it has been most freely censured, it has been generally acknowledged to contain a collection of many valuable things of divers kinds."[k] It was first attacked by Baxter's indefatigable adversary, Long; who published, in 1697, 'A Review of Mr. Richard Baxter's Life; wherein many mistakes are rectified, some false relations detected, some omissions supplied, out of his other books; with remarks on several material passages.' 8vo. This volume is in fact only a repetition of the 'Second Part of the Unreasonableness of Separation,' published by Long, in 1682, with additions of the same malignant nature. Of this man of violence and war, enough has already been said. Baxter's account of his former attack upon him is justly applicable to the present. His object is not to correct the mistakes or errors of Baxter, but to prove him to have been a liar, and a villain, and that the

[1] Calamy, vol. i. pp. 376—380. [k] Pref. to Calamy's Abridg.

men of his party were generally no better. It is unnecessary to vindicate Richard Baxter from such charges of the Rev. Thomas Long, prebendary of Exeter.

The work was attacked with no less virulence and malignity by a person named Young, who, Calamy says, came from Plymouth. He entitles his small Grub-street libel, 'Anti-Baxterianæ: or, Animadversions on a book entitled Reliquiæ Baxterianæ.' 1696. 12mo. It is difficult to divine the motive or object of this worthless performance; the author of which seems to have been crazed as well as wicked. He talks all sorts of nonsense and ribaldry; speaking sometimes as a churchman, and sometimes as a dissenter: so that no correct opinion can be formed, either of his sentiments or designs, from this publication.

Dr. Calamy published in 1705, 'An Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times.' This work appeared at first in one volume, 8vo; but in 1713, the author re-published it in two volumes, with a continuance of the history of the Dissenters till 1711, and an account of the ejected ministers. In 1727, he published 'A Continuation of the Account of the ejected Ministers;' so that the complete work makes four considerable volumes. As an abridgment of Baxter it is very faithful, but dull; because it is a continued translation of Baxter's own narrative from the first to the third person: thus destroying the charm of the finest of Baxter's personal descriptions, and necessarily fettering the style of Calamy throughout. The entire work, however, is replete with valuable, and in general, accurate information respecting the character, principles, and sufferings, of the Nonconformists.

"This work," the author says, "cost me no little pains, and was more taken notice of in the world, and got me more friends and enemies too, than I could have expected or imagined. I had the thanks of several in the established church, as well as of a great number out of it. Many also were displeased, and some went so far as to threaten my abridgment with the public censure of the convocation. A dignified clergyman discoursing to that purpose with one of my booksellers, that had a concern in the work, and telling him what he had heard from several, that there was a design of that nature on foot, the bookseller requested him to be so kind as to tell any members of the convocation, that if they would pursue that design, and bring it to bear, he would willingly present such as were active in it with

a purse of guineas, and did not doubt but the consequence would turn to good account to him in the way of business. This being reported, there was no more talk heard of that nature.

"Among other censurers, Dr. William Nichols, some time after publishing a Latin defence of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, charges me in his historical Apparatus, 'with hard and severe reflections running through my work.'"[1]

As a counterpart and counteraction to Baxter and Calamy, John Walker, a clergyman of Exeter, published in a folio volume, 'An Attempt towards recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England, Heads of Colleges, Fellows, Scholars, &c., who were sequestered, harassed, &c., in the late time of the grand Rebellion; occasioned by the ninth chapter, now the second volume, of Dr. Calamy's Abridgment,' &c. 1714.

It is impossible to deny that many of the clergy suffered severely during the civil wars, which no doubt involved many worthy individuals and families in undeserved as well as severe distress. Walker, it is evident, bestowed great pains to represent their hardships. But his attempt falls far short of the book to which it was intended as a reply. It is exceedingly incorrect in the statement of numbers, in the representation of many occurrences, and in general is deficient in historic fidelity. It cannot be referred to as a book of authority.

"My work," says Calamy, "was also warmly reflected on in a pamphlet, entitled, 'A Case of present Concern in a Letter to a Member of the House of Commons,' in Mr. Wesley's defence of his letter concerning the education of Dissenters in their private academies; in a sermon of Mr. Stubbs, entitled, 'For God or for Baal, or no Neutrality in Religion;' and in almost all the warm and angry pamphlets which at that time swarmed from the press in great plenty. 'Animadversions' were published upon me in a dialogue; my Abridgment was said to 'deserve to be condemned by public authority, and to undergo the fiery trial; and there came out a rebuke to Mr. Edmund Calamy, author of the Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life by Thomas Long, B. D. But he was a man of such a temper, and the spirit that ran

[1] Dr. Nichols' work was replied to by Mr. Peirce of Exeter, in his 'Vindication of the Dissenters.' Both Nichols and Peirce published first in Latin; but their works afterwards appeared in English. Those who are disinclined to read larger publications, will find in these two volumes the substance of the controversy between the Church and the Nonconformists.

through his writings was so bitter, and had such a mixture of weakness with fury, that it seemed to little purpose to offer at pursuing the argument, and therefore I forebore." [m]

In the tenth chapter of his Abridgment, Calamy reduces to distinct heads the reasons of the Nonconformists for separating from the church of England. This part of the work is written with great care and judgment, and was considered at the time one of the ablest defences of the Nonconformists which had appeared. It was therefore attacked by the Rev. Thomas Ollyffe, rector of Durton and Hedgerly, in his 'Defence of Ministerial Conformity,' which came out in three parts in the years 1703, 1705, and 1706. The celebrated Dr. Hoadly, afterwards bishop of Bangor, also entered the lists with Calamy in 'The Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England;' which appeared in two parts, and went through several editions. In reply to both these antagonists, Calamy published in three successive parts, occupying as many volumes, his 'Defence of Moderate Nonconformity.' 1703-4-5. The controversy was managed with great ability on both sides, and affords by far the fullest view of the points in debate between the Church and the Nonconformists to be found in our language. [n]

[m] Calamy's Own Life, vol. i. pp. 445—449.

[n] It called forth the commendation of John Locke, who declared that while the author "stood to the principles there laid down, he had no occasion to be afraid of any antagonist."—*Calamy's Own Life*, vol. ii. p. 31.

CHAPTER XII.

DEVOTIONAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'The Saint's Everlasting Rest'—Written for his own use in the time of Sickness—Composed in Six Months—Notices of Brook, Pym, and Hampden, whose names are omitted in the latter Editions—Description, Character, and Usefulness of the Work—Attacked by Firmin—Baxter's 'Answer to his Exceptions'—'The Divine Life'—Occasioned by a request of the Countess of Balcarras—Its Object and Excellence—'Funeral Sermons' for various Persons—'Treatise of Death'—'Dying Thoughts'—'Reformed Liturgy'—'Paraphrase on the New Testament'—'Monthly Preparations for the Communion'—'Poetical Fragments'—'Additions' to the Fragments—'Paraphrase of the Psalms'—General Review of his Poetry—Conclusion.

THE talents of Baxter as a writer appear to great advantage in every department in which they were employed. As a controversialist, he had not only no superior, but no equal in his day. In the field of theological warfare he was a giant, and few individuals who attempted to grapple with him, had reason to be proud of their success. In the practical instruction of religion he was not less distinguished. His knowledge of the word of God, and of the corrupt workings of the human heart, was profound; while his power over the minds and the affections of others, has been evinced by the numbers who have derived the highest benefit from his preaching and his writings. It is an extraordinary circumstance that, amidst the multiplicity of his labours, and the variety of his controversial discussions, he was enabled to preserve uninjured, during a long period of years, a more elevated tone of devotional feeling than has usually been enjoyed by Christians, even in the most favoured walks of life. This will appear in the following review, which commences with the first and most popular of his works, and closes with almost the last production of his pen.

'The Saint's Everlasting Rest,'[o] though the second book which Baxter published, was the first he wrote; and had he never written another, it alone would have endeared his memory for ever, to all who cherish the sublime hopes of the Gospel. "It was written by the author for his own use during the time of his languishing, when God took him off from all public employment;" and furnishes an admirable illustration of the richness and vigour of his mind, as well as of the great sources of its consolation. "While I was in health," he says, "I had not the least thought of writing books, or of serving God in any more public way than preaching, but when I was weakened with great bleeding, and left solitary in my chamber at Sir John Cook's, in Derbyshire, without any acquaintance but my servant about me, and was sentenced to death by the physicians, I began to contemplate more seriously on the everlasting rest, which I apprehended myself to be just on the borders of. That my thoughts might not too much scatter in my meditation, I began to write something on that subject, intending but the quantity of a sermon or two; but being continued long in weakness, where I had no books and no better employment, I followed it on, till it was enlarged to the bulk in which it is published. The first three weeks I spent on it was at Mr. Nowel's house, at Kirkby Mallory, in Leicestershire; a quarter of a year more, at the seasons which so great weakness would allow, I bestowed on it at Sir Thomas Rous's, in Worcestershire; and I finished it shortly after at Kidderminster."[p]

Thus, in less than six months, and those months of pain and sickness, he produced a quarto volume of more than eight hundred pages, rich in Christian sentiment, wonderfully correct and pointed in style, and fertile in most beautiful illustrations. "The marginal citations," he tells us, "I put in after I came home to my books, but almost all the book itself was written when I had no book but a Bible and a Concordance; and I found that the transcript of the heart hath the greatest force on the hearts of others."

The success and approbation which this work experienced, were very great. The first edition was published in 1649; the ninth edition, now before me, appeared in 1662, and it passed through several other editions in 4to. in the course of the few following years.

[o] Works, vols. xxii. xxiii. [p] Life, p. 108.

To each of the four parts into which the work is divided, dedications are prefixed. The whole is dedicated to the people of Kidderminster; the first part to Sir Thomas and Lady Jane Rous; and the three following to the people of Bridgnorth, Coventry, and Shrewsbury. The first three are addressed to those who had enjoyed his stated, or occasional labours; the last is "a testimony of his love to his native soil, and to his many godly and faithful friends there living." All these addresses contain many faithful admonitions and warnings, much calculated to impress the minds of those with whom he had associated. [q]

Considerable alterations were made in the latter editions of the Rest. The most singular of these, is his omitting the names of Brook, Hampden, and Pym, as among those whom he rejoiced to have the prospect of meeting in heaven! It certainly would have been better either not to have introduced them at all, or to have allowed their names to remain. It looks like blotting them out of the book of life. The expectation that this would please the enemies of Puritanism, failed to be realized; while the author, at the same time, did violence to his own feelings, as his judgment of the individuals whose names he erased remained the same. "The need," he says, "which I perceived of taking away from before such men as Dr. Jane, any thing which they might stumble at, made me blot out the names of Lord Brook, Pym, and Hampden, in all the impressions of the book that were made since 1659: yet this did not satisfy. But I must tell the reader, that I did it not as changing my judgment of the persons, well known to the world: of whom Mr. John Hampden was one, whom friends and enemies acknowledged to be most eminent for prudence, piety, and peaceable counsels; having the most universal praise of any gentleman that I remember of that age." [r] This testimony to the Christian character of Hampden is particularly important, as Baxter appears to have been very intimate with him. His patriotism will not be reckoned the less worthy of estimation, when it is ascertained to have been of Christian origin and growth.

Though Baxter says nothing particular of Brook and Pym, it

[q] These dedications, with the exception of the first to the people of Kidderminster, and that to Sir Thomas and Lady Rous, do not exist in the first edition. They appear to have been added afterwards.

[r] Life, part iii. 177.

may not be unacceptable to the reader to be furnished with their character. Robert Greville, Lord Brook, was distinguished for his patriotism, his love of liberty, and his ardent piety. He and Lord Say had fully determined to go to America, on account of the civil and religious oppressions of Charles I.; and though he never left England, one of the early settlements was named Saybrook, after the two noblemen. He was a leading man in the Long Parliament, one of the commanders in its army; and was killed by a musket shot in the eye, at the storming of a close in Lichfield, in 1643.[s]

Lord Brook was an author as well as a soldier, and signalized himself in 'A Discourse, opening the Nature of that Episcopacy which is exercised in England.' 1641. 4to. This tract discovers a considerable portion of acuteness, and a respectable degree of acquaintance with the argument both from Scripture and antiquity. The piety and liberality of the writer are also very strongly marked. The conclusion of it is worth quoting. "To this end, God assisting me, my desire, prayer, endeavour, shall still be to follow peace and holiness. And though there may haply be some little dissent between my poor judgment and weak conscience, and other good men who are more clear and strong; yet my prayer shall still be to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And as many as walk after this rule, peace, I hope, shall still be on them, and the whole Israel of God."[t] Yet Brook was a sectary and fanatic! He wrote another book, 'The Union of the Soul and Truth,' which I have not seen.

For the character of John Pym, who died about the same time with Lord Brook, it is enough to refer to Neal.[u] He was an admirable speaker, a man of profound knowledge and experience in business, and no less respected for his private worth and piety than for his public talents. He was carried from his own house to Westminster on the shoulders of the chief men of the House of Commons, the whole House going in procession before him, preceded by the assembly of divines. Marshall delivered a most eloquent and pertinent funeral sermon on the occasion. Parliament ordered his debts to be paid, and a stately monument to be built for him in the chapel of Henry VII.[x]

Such were the men whose names Baxter was induced, from

[s] Whitelocke's Mem. p. 66.
[t] Pp. 123, 124.
[u] Vol. iii. p. 82.
[x] Baillie's Letters, vol. i. p. 409.

the clamour raised against them, to erase from the book in which they had been honourably mentioned, as among the excellent of the earth, who had gone to that rest, in which he hoped shortly to join their glorified spirits. The clamour which required the names of such men to be blotted out, is disgraceful only to those who manifested it. No act of man, or lapse of time, can erase from the roll of England's Christian patriots, the names of Brook, Pym, and Hampden; or deprive them of the glory which justly belongs to their illustrious deeds.

The first and last parts of the Saint's Rest, were all that the author originally designed; the one containing the explanation of the nature of the rest, the other 'a directory for getting and keeping the heart in heaven, by heavenly meditation.' The last, indeed, he tells us, was the main thing intended in the writing of the book, and to which all the rest is subservient. The second part treats of the certainty of the future rest, where he enters much further, than is necessary in such a book, into the evidences of Revelation, mixed up with discussions and stories about apparitions, witches, and compacts with the devil; which are blemishes on the fair face of this beautiful production. The third is on the use which ought to be made of the doctrine and prospect of the everlasting rest. The first four chapters of it being intended for secure and sensual sinners who might happen to read the book; and the three last for Christians, to direct and comfort them in the time of affliction, and to stir them up to seek the salvation of their brethren.

Comparing the first edition of this work, which is very rare, with the subsequent ones, which the author considerably altered, I am disposed to give it the preference. It contains chiefly his own thoughts, as they arose in his mind, and were freely expressed during a period of severe affliction, when he was far removed from books, and had eternity constantly before him. There are very few of those marginal notes and digressions which were supplied at a future period, and that tend much more to distract than to interest the reader.

The very title of this book operates like a charm on the mind of a Christian, and leads him to associate with it the most delightful ideas. EVERLASTING REST presents to the wearied, harassed, suffering spirit, a prospect full of glory and repose. As the cessation of labour, the termination of suffering, and the end of all evil; in connexion with the eternal enjoyment of God, it is the sum of Christian blessedness: comprehending in

it all that is calculated to reconcile to the trials of life, and to sustain under its labours and sorrows. It is a rest which consists not in indisposition or incapacity for action, or in the indulgence of indolence and sloth; but which implies activity without weariness, and exertion without fatigue; the constant employment of our best faculties on the worthiest objects and employmeents securing that felicity which is to be found only in doing the will of God, without involving exhaustion of spirits, or diminution of strength. What more can man desire to render him supremely happy?

To such a person as Baxter, a martyr to disease and pain, possessed of a spirit characterised by restless activity, which was constantly repressed and counteracted by a body ill adapted to be the instrument of its boundless desires; but who, notwithstanding this counteraction, continually struggled to do the work of God, the hope of rest must have been exquisitely delightful. Surrounded as he was at the same time with all that grieved his spirit, and resisted his efforts, it is not wonderful that he fled to the promise of rest as his refuge and his anchor. While he did this, however, he did not surrender himself to the mere contemplation of the joy set before him; it roused and excited him to still greater exertions; or induced that patience *with joyfulness*, of which the apostle speaks, and which is the peculiar effect of the Christian hope.

"It is sweet to look forward to the restitution of all things; to think of a world where God is entirely glorified, and entirely loved, and entirely obeyed; where sin and sorrow are no more; where severed friends shall meet, never again to part; where the body shall not weigh down the spirit, but shall be its fit medium of communication with all the glorious inhabitants and scenery of heaven; where no discordant tones or jarring feelings shall interrupt or mar the harmony of that universal song which shall burst from every heart and every tongue, to him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And it is not only sweet, but most profitable to meditate on these prospects. It is a most healthful exercise. It brings the soul into contact with that society to which it properly belongs, and for which it was created.

"The world think that these heavenly musings must unqualify the mind for present exertion. But this is a mistake, arising from an ignorance of the nature of heaven. The happiness of heaven is the perfection of those principles which lead to the

discharge of duty, and therefore the contemplation of it must increase our sense of the importance of duty. That happiness is not entirely a future thing, but rather the completion of a present process, in which every duty bears an important part. The character and the happiness of heaven, like the light and heat of the sun-beams, are so connected, that it is impossible to separate them, and the natural and instinctive desire of the one is thus necessarily linked to the desire of the other. Full of peace, as the prospect of heaven is, there is no indolent relinquishment of duty connected with the contemplation of it: for heaven is full of action. Its repose is like the repose of nature; the repose of planets in their orbits. It is a rest from all controversy with God; from all opposition to his will. His servants serve Him. Farewell, vain world! No rest hast thou to offer which can compare with this. The night is far spent; soon will *that* day dawn, and the shadows flee away."[y]

'The Saint's Rest' has been one of the most useful of Baxter's works; the most useful to Christians, for whom it was chiefly intended. It appears to have been the means of impressing Mr. Thomas Doolittle, and Mr. John Janeway, two excellent Nonconformist ministers. Sir Henry Ashurst ascribed his conversion to it. Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston, Robert Warburton, of Grange, both persons of great eminence in piety, devoted much of the evenings of their lives to the reading of this work, and derived great enjoyment from it. But these, I apprehend, are far from solitary instances; it has gone through many editions, and fully justifies the remark made on it by Dr. Bates, "It is a book for which multitudes will have cause to bless God for ever."

The late Mr. Fawcett, of Kidderminster, published an excellent abridgment of it in 1758. It makes no alteration on the sense or even language of the author, but diminishes the bulk of the work by omitting many digressions, controversial discussions, together with the prefaces, dedications, and other things of a temporary and local nature. From that time, the circulation of the original work has been greatly diminished, but I have no doubt the design of the author has been fully accomplished; as a much greater circulation has been given to his sentiments in a moderate 12mo than could have been obtained for the bulky 4to. Those, however, who wish to do full justice to Baxter and his treatise, will not be satisfied with any thing but the original.

Giles Firmin, a Presbyterian minister, who appears to have

[y] Erskine's Introductory Essay to the Saint's Rest, pp. 3—35.

thought Baxter carried his views of meditation on the 'Saint's Rest' too far, published in 1671, what Baxter calls "a gentle reproof for tying men too strictly to meditation." This Baxter answered immediately in a small pamphlet entitled, 'The Duty of Heavenly Meditation Reviewed, against the Exceptions of Mr. Giles Firmin.' 4to. In general, there is little danger of men erring in the extreme of dwelling too much on heavenly and eternal things. The number of persons addicted to mystical devotion, or exclusively engrossed by spiritual exercises, has been small compared with the multitude even of serious Christians, whose minds have been too little occupied in this manner. The attractions of earth are so powerful, and the affinities of our nature so strong to material objects, that we require every possible excitement and encouragement to look off from the things that are seen and temporal, to those which are unseen and eternal. And as we cannot be influenced by that which we do not know or love, or with which we are not conversant, the more that the unseen world and its permanent glories are the objects of contemplation, the more powerfully must we be attracted by them, till meditation on heaven is swallowed up in its full and everlasting enjoyment.

The work on the 'Divine Life,'[z] published in 1664, next demands our attention. The occasion of it, he tells us, was this: "The Countess of Balcarras,[a] before going into Scotland after her abode in England, being deeply sensible of the loss of the company of those friends which she left behind her, desired me to preach the last sermon which she was to hear from me, on these words of Christ: 'Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' At her request I preached on this text, and being afterwards desired by her to give it her in writing, and the publication being her design, I prefixed the two other treatises, to make it more considerable, and published them together. The treatise is upon the most excellent subject, but not elaborate at

[z] Works, vol. xiii.

[a] Since the remark on the Countess of Balcarras, at page 503, was printed off, I have ascertained that she was married a second time to the unfortunate Earl of Argyle, there referred to. I have seen also a curious letter from her to the Duke of Lauderdale, accompanying the stone taken from the heart of her son, of which Baxter speaks.—*Letters from Lady Margaret Kennedy, afterwards wife to Bishop Burnet.*

all; being but popular sermons preached in the midst of diverting businesses, accusations, and malicious clamours.

"When I offered it to the press, I was fain to leave out the quantity of one sermon in the end of the second treatise, (that God took Enoch,) wherein I showed what a mercy it is to one that walked with God, to be taken to him from this world; because it is a dark, wicked, malicious implacable, treacherous, deceitful world, &c. All which the bishop's chaplain must have expunged, because men would think it was all spoken of them. And so the world hath got a protection against the force of our baptismal vow." [a]

This admirable treatise may be placed either under the head of the experimental or the devotional works of our author. I have placed it in the latter class, chiefly for my own convenience in the arrangement of this work. It is divided into three parts—The Knowledge of God—Walking with God—and Converse with God in solitude. This division obviously embraces all the great points of Christian practice and experience. Without the knowledge of God, man can have no objective religion. He is the glorious object of love, veneration, and hope; the source of all pure and spiritual enjoyment; and the spring of all right conduct. He who knows God aright, will, at the same time, walk with God, or in the course of obedience to him; and with this course will be invariably connected, that spiritual fellowship with him which is at once the enjoyment of religion, and the best proof of its reality.

None of the works of Baxter is written with greater sweetness than this. The manner of it is in good keeping with the subject: soft, tender, and full of spirituality. He lays open to the reader, as it were, the very recesses of his own heart; and describes his own character and procedure in delineating the essential features of the Christian character and profession. In himself were combined, in an extraordinary degree, the contemplative and the active in religion. In the former he delighted no less than in the latter. To him the Gospel of Christ was a continual feast. It presented to him a boundless and exhaustless subject; combining all that was holy, excellent, and sublime; all that was most worthy in itself with every thing calculated to inspire the love of goodness, and promote the most joyful compliance with the divine will. In meditation he found relief from the severity of bodily pain, from the anguish

[a] Life, part i. p. 120.

of disappointment, and the sorrow of unmerited suffering; from the pains and griefs occasioned by his own sins, or the sins of others. While all around was darkness and tempest, here he found repose to his spirit, and a quiet refuge. When languid, it recruited his strength; when discouraged, it re-invigorated his hope; when exposed to perils, or called to the discharge of arduous duties, it gave fresh energy and animation to his soul. God as revealed in the economy of redemption, was the grand centre of all the principles, feelings, and exercises of Baxter. It was to him at once an attractive as well as a repelling power; drawing him to holiness and happiness, and repelling every thing that was mean and unworthy from his character, as well as what was more directly evil.

To the extraordinary degree in which the mind of Baxter was imbued with the spiritual knowledge of God, arising from the intimacy of his communion with him, arose no small portion of that energy of character for which he was so distinguished. The proper value of the contemplative life in him was thus strikingly illustrated. In many men, contemplation operates as a principle of seclusion: it renders society disagreeable; the bustle and business of it intolerable. They can be happy only in retirement, and in abstraction from the duties of social obligation. Such persons become a kind of spiritual epicures: who can enjoy only what is exquisite, and adapted to the most delicate palate. The common food of Christianity is unsuited to them. Their religion assumes all the character of a refined, spiritual selfism; concerned only about one thing, and that thing comfort: it partakes not of the active principles or sympathies of apostolic Christianity.

In others, activity is too much separated from meditation. The leaves and the fruit are cultivated without due attention to the root of the tree. Enjoyment is found only, or chiefly in the crowd, or on the stage of public life. Effect is studied rather than principle; and all is supposed to be well if others are but persuaded that it is so. There is little that is permanent and influential in this class of persons. What is thus produced is easily blasted and overthrown. There is a want of sufficient breadth and depth in the foundation, for the superstructure which they endeavour to rear, and hence it often tumbles into ruin. Professed concern for the good of others, when connected with indifference to our own, cannot be sincere in its nature or lasting in its duration. Baxter is a happy illustration

of the two great constituent principles of the Christian character now adverted to, and which constitute the subject of the work under consideration.

The chief fault that presents itself to me in this work is, the extent to which he dwells on the natural attributes of God, such as his eternity, simplicity, omnipotence, &c., as comprehended in that knowledge which is eternal life. Not that I would exclude these things; but he has dwelt upon them in undue proportion, and to the exclusion of more extended views of the moral attributes of God, which constitute the grand subject of Revelation, and the great objects of Christian faith and enjoyment. In the natural perfections of God, however, Baxter was furnished with delightful subjects for the exercise of his metaphysical powers. The uses of God's "simple and uncompounded essence of his incorporeality and invisibility," were quite to his taste; though likely to be regarded by the reader as more ingenious than profitable. He has also some disquisitions about sin, as whether "God decrees not, or wills not, *ut evenit peccatum;* and whether he wills *de eventu*, that sin shall not come to pass, when it doth?" in which little light is thrown on these mysterious questions.

These, however, are but trifling blemishes in this valuable work, which abounds with passages of great beauty, illustrative not only of the fine genius, but the intense ardour of Baxter's spirit and feelings. I have just fixed my eye on a page, which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of extracting, though it is but one of many I have been tempted to introduce.

"To walk with God," he says, "is a word so high, that I should have feared the guilt of arrogance in using it, if I had not found it in the Holy Scriptures. It is a word that importeth so high and holy a frame of soul, and expresseth such high and holy actions, that the naming of it striketh my heart with reverence, as if I had heard the voice to Moses, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' Methinks he that shall say to me, Come see a man that walks with God, doth call me to see one that is next unto an angel or glorified soul. It is a far more reverend object in mine eye than ten thousand lords or princes, considered only in their fleshly glory. It is a wiser action for people to run and crowd together to see a man that walks with God, than to see the pompous train of princes, their entertainments, or their triumph. Oh! happy man that walks

with God, though neglected and contemned by all about him! What blessed sights doth he daily see! What ravishing tidings, what pleasant melody doth he daily hear, unless it be in his swoons or sickness! What delectable food doth he daily taste! He seeth, by faith, the God, the glory which the blessed spirits see at hand by nearest intuition! He seeth that in a glass, and darkly, which they behold with open face! He seeth the glorious Majesty of his Creator, the eternal King, the Cause of causes, the Composer, Upholder, Preserver, and Governor of all worlds! He beholdeth the wonderful methods of his providence; and what he cannot reach to see, he admireth, and waiteth for the time when that also shall be open to his view! He seeth by faith the world of spirits, the hosts that attend the throne of God; their perfect righteousness, their full devotedness to God; their ardent love, their flaming zeal, their ready and cheerful obedience, their dignity and shining glory, in which the lowest of them exceed that which the disciples saw on Moses and Elias, when they appeared on the holy mount and talked with Christ! He hears by faith the heavenly concert, the high and harmonious songs of praise, the joyful triumphs of crowned saints, the sweet commemorations of the things that were done and suffered on earth, with the praises of Him that redeemed them by his blood and made them kings and priests unto God. Herein he hath sometimes a sweet foretaste of the everlasting pleasures which, though it be but little, as Jonathan's honey on the end of his rod, or as the clusters of grapes which were brought from Canaan into the wilderness; yet they are more excellent than all the delights of sinners." [c]

Under the general head of his devotional writings, it is necessary that I should include the following funeral sermons, from several of which I have already made extracts in the first part of this work; and two treatises on the subject of death. I class them together as they relate chiefly to one topic, and do not call for distinct notice. Their titles, which I give fully, sufficiently explain their nature.

'The last work of a Believer, his passing prayer, recommending his departing spirit to Christ, to be received by him, prepared for the funeral of Mary, the widow first of Francis Charlton, Esq., and after of Thomas Hanmer, Esq.' 1660. 4to.[d]

'A Sermon preached at the funeral of that holy, painful, and fruitful minister of Christ, Mr. Henry Stubbs, about fifty years a

[c] Works, vol. xiii. pp. 242, 243. [d] Ibid. vol. p. 11.

successful preacher at Bristol, Wells, Chew, Dursley, London, and divers other places.' 1678. 4to.[e]

'A true Believer's choice and pleasure instanced in the exemplary life of Mrs. Mary Coxe, the late wife of Dr. Thomas Coxe.' 1680. 4to.[f]

'Faithful Souls shall be with Christ, the certainty proved, and their Christianity described and exemplified in the truly Christian life and death of that excellent amiable saint, Henry Ashurst, Esq., citizen of London, briefly and truly published for the conviction of hypocrites and the malignant, the strengthening of believers, and the imitation of all, especially the masters of families in London. Go, and do thou likewise.' 1681. 4to.[g]

'A Sermon preached at the funeral of Mr. John Corbet, that faithful minister of Christ, with his true and exemplary character.' 1682. 4to.[h]

'A treatise of death, the last enemy to be destroyed.[i] Showing wherein its enmity consisteth, and how it is destroyed. Part of it was preached at the funeral of Elizabeth, the late wife of Mr. Joseph Baker, pastor of the church at St. Andrew's, in Worcester. With some few passages of the life of the said Mrs. Baker, observed.' 1659. 8vo.[k]

'Mr. Baxter's Dying Thoughts upon Philippians i. 23.[l] Written for his own use on the latter times of his corporal pains and weakness.' 1683. 4to.[m]

All these discourses and treatises show how familiar the mind of Baxter was with the subject of death, and illustrate the admirable use which he made of it, in promoting the good of others. It was a favourite topic of his ministry from the very beginning, arising out of the feeble state of his health, and from the apprehension which he entertained that his career was likely to be a very short one. Though in this he was mistaken, he never lost the impression that he must soon die, and therefore constantly preached and wrote under that impression.

His 'Dying Thoughts' abound in admirable sentiments, expressed in appropriate and beautiful language, worthy of a believer in the near prospect of eternity. They were written for his own use, and originally intended to be left to his executors for publica-

[e] Works, vol. xiii. p. 61. [f] Ibid. p. 91. [g] Ibid. p. 124.
[h] Ibid. p. 163.
[i] Among the Baxter MSS. is a letter from a clergyman of the name of Taylor, at Slandford, acknowledging that the 'Treatise on Death' had been the means of his conversion; and requesting Baxter's advice respecting some difficulties which he felt on the subject of subscription.
[k] Works, vol. xvii. p. 527. [l] Ibid. vol. i. p. 23. [m] Ibid. vol. xxvii.

tion, but were finally brought out by himself. Calamy puts them under the date of 1685, and represents them as having furnished great consolation to Lord William Russell before his execution. But, as he speaks of himself as in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-third of his ministry,[n] which was the year of his death, he must have altered and improved the work shortly before he died.[o]

In these Thoughts, as there are few raptures, so there are no depressions or despondencies. They discover throughout a solemn, calm, undisturbed serenity; the steady contemplation of dissolution and all its consequences, without alarm or terror. He knew in whom he had believed; to him, therefore, death had no sting. Its poison had been extracted, and the grim tyrant deprived of his power to injure. In Christ, his soul had found rest; his life was made sure by the covenant of redemption: so that he could lay down his head and die in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to glory. Unenviable must be the state of that man's feelings, who can read these reflections as the honest and sincere expressions of a soul ready to take its flight into eternity, without exclaiming, "Let me die the death of this righteous man, and let my latter end be like his."

Among the devotional works of Baxter must be classed 'The Reformed Liturgy,' which he drew up by the request of his brethren, at the time of the Savoy conference. Part of it was published among the other papers relating to that affair, and in his Own Life, by Sylvester; the whole appears among the documents of the Savoy conference; at the end of the first volume of Calamy's Abridgment; in the folio edition of his works; and in the fifteenth volume of the present edition. The circumstances which led to his compiling this work have been sufficiently detailed in the account of the Savoy meeting and debates. Baxter produced an entirely new liturgical service, not because he objected to the whole, or greater part of the former, but as the shortest and easiest method of removing what he considered its defects, its inaccuracies, and repetitions. It was not designed by him to be enforced by legal enactments, in the room of the other; but rather as a specimen, or directory, for con-

[n] Works, vol. xvii. p. 331.

[o] His 'Dying Thoughts' were abridged by Fawcett, a work by no means so necessary as the abridgment of the 'Saint's Rest.' Sir James Stonehouse was so delighted with them, that he says "I have almost learnt them by heart; I am continually quoting them in my letters."—See *Letters from Job Orton, &c.* vol. ii. p. 209.

ducting the public service of the church. He was occupied on this work not more than a fortnight; a period which he acknowledges to have been "too short for doing it with the accurateness which a business of that nature required; or for the consulting with men or authors. He could make no use of any book, except a Bible and a Concordance; but he compared it all with the Assembly's Directory, the Book of Common-prayer, Hammond and L'Estrange." [p]

Without pronouncing on the comparative excellences of this liturgical work, or intimating that it is every thing such a work should be, it is not too much to say, that it is remarkable for simplicity, appropriateness, and fulness. The forms of prayer contain variety without repetition, and are so scriptural that they are made up almost entirely of scriptural language; references to which he has thrown into the margin. Few better liturgies probably exist; and had it, or something of the same improved description, been adopted by the church, at the period when the subject was under discussion, some of the chief difficulties experienced by the early Nonconformists to the Book of Common-prayer would have been removed. There was no disposition then, however, to listen to the voice of candid and conscientious objection; and though the subject has frequently been agitated since, the imperfections of the Anglican Liturgy seem to be increasingly sanctified by time, and every day diminishes the probability of any improvement taking place upon it. The motive for alteration, so far as the Nonconformists are concerned, may be said to be extinguished; as no change on the liturgical forms of the Church, would reconcile the great body of the Dissenters to it. Their objections are now chiefly to the constitution of the church as allied to the state, and to the whole system of episcopal government; objections which no modification of forms and ceremonies would either remove or materially alter.

In this class of writing, I feel justified in placing the only work of an expository nature published by Baxter: his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament, with Notes, Doctrinal and Practical,' &c. 1685. 4to.[q] Of the trouble into which he was

[p] Life, part ii. p. 306.

[q] Walch, in his 'Bibliotheca Theologica,' mentions 'Meditations on the Seven Penitential Psalms,' by Baxter. He says they were published in English, and translated into German, in which language they appeared in two editions, 1684 and 1687. He says they are not properly exegetical, but moral, in their nature, and ought to be ranked in that class of books. I cannot po-

brought by this work, a full account has already been given, in the history of his trial before the infamous Jefferies. It now only remains to say something of the book itself. Its origin and object are well stated by himself in the following passage in the preface.

"A friend long urging me to write a paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans, as being hard to be understood; when I had done it, I found so much profit by the attempt, that it drew me to go on till I had finished what I offer you. It was like almost all my other public works, done by the unexpected conduct of God's urgent providence, not only without, but contrary to my former purposes. God hath blessed his church with many men's excellent commentaries on the Scriptures, and I never thought myself fit to do it better than they have done; but that is best for some persons' use which is not best to others. I long wished that some abler man would furnish vulgar families with such a brief exposition as might be fitted to the use of their daily course in reading the Scriptures, and instructing their households. I found that many who have done it better than I can do, are too large and costly for this use; some, like Diodati, are very sound but unsatisfactorily brief; some have parcelled their annotations into so numerous shreds, that readers, especially in a family course, will not stay to search and set them together to make up the sense. I like Dr. Hammond's order best, but I differ from him in so much of the matter,—take his style to be too lax, his criticisms not useful to the vulgar, and his volume too big and costly; I therefore chose more plainly, and yet more briefly and practically, by the way of paraphrase, to suit it to my intended end.

"But I must give the reader notice, that where I seem but in few words to vary from the text, those words answer the large criticisms of divers expositors, as the learned may find by searching them and the Greek text; though I must not stay to give the reasons of them as I go on. That though I have studied plainness, yet brevity is unavoidably obscure to unexercised persons, who, as learners, cannot understand things without many words. That where the Evangelists oft repeat the same things to avoid tediousness, I repeat not the whole exposition; and yet thought it not meet wholly to pass it by. That where the text is

sitively affirm that Walch is mistaken, but I have never seen any such work of Baxter's; nor does it appear in any catalogue of his books published in England, either by himself or others.

plain of itself, instead of an exposition, I fill up the space by doctrinal, or practical observations, seeing practice is the end of all, and to learners this part is of great necessity. That where great doctrinal controversies depend on the exposition of any text, I have handled those more largely than the rest, and I hope with pacificatory and satisfactory evidence." [r]

Though this work is not critical, and was intended by the author chiefly for the unlearned, it bears marks of considerable labour when attentively examined. Baxter had long and profoundly studied the Scriptures; possessing a large portion of acuteness, and being very independent in his manner of thinking, he often throws considerable light on difficult passages. He does not give the process, but the results; without the parade of criticism and learning, he frequently furnishes us with their best fruits. So that without toil or labour, we are at once put in possession of what he conceived to be the meaning of the word of God. I feel bound to say, that I have seldom consulted Baxter's Paraphrase, which I have done occasionally for many years, without deriving instruction from it; and finding that it either threw some light on what was dark, or suggested what tended to remove a difficulty.

The reasons which he assigns for not attempting an exposition of the book of Revelation, are worthy of quotation. Among other things, he says,

"I am far below Dionysius, Alexandrinus, and most of the ancient Fathers, even Augustine himself, who professed that they understood it not. Yea, the incomparable Calvin professeth that he understood not the thousandth part of it; and his partner, Beza, would give us little of it, next to none: both refusing to write a comment on it. I honour them that know more than I, and contradict them not; I had rather say too little, where other men have said enough, than say more than I know. It is not through mere sloth that I am ignorant. Women and boys, who have studied it less than I, think they know herein what I do not; but I confess that despair is much of the cause. Forty-four years ago, when I was but young, I studied it, I doubt too soon, and read Brightman, Napier, Pareus, &c., and after that Mede, Potter, and many more; beside such treatises as Downame de Antichristo Broughton, and other such; with the answers of Bellarmine, &c. I met with many divines and laymen who had chosen it out for the chief study of their lives,

[r] Preface to 'Paraphrase on the New Testament.'

and I found so great diversity of opinions, five of the most confident going four ways, and so little proof of what they most confidently asserted, that I despaired of being so much wiser than they as to come to satisfaction, if I should lay by more necessary studies, and make this the business of the rest of my life, which yet I durst not do. Afterwards I conversed with my fellow labourer, Mr. Nathaniel Stephens, who hath written of it, and was much upon it in his discourse, but I durst not be drawn to a deep study of it. When since I read Mr. Durham, Dr. More, &c., and Grotius, and Dr. Hammond, and many annotators, I confess despair, and more needful business, made me do it but superficially. And when I had for my own use written the rest of this Paraphrase on the New Testament, I proposed to have said nothing of any more of the Revelations than of the three first chapters, professing that I understood it not; but after, being loth to omit wholly any part of the New Testament, and thinking that the renewed study of that which speaketh so much of the New Jerusalem might be suitable to a pained dying man, I thought of it more searchingly than I had heretofore; but have not now either the strength of wit, or length of time, that are necessary to so hard a work, and therefore presume not to oppose others, but refer the readers to them that have more thoroughly studied and expounded it than I can do. But yet I thought that those generals which I understood might be useful to unlearned readers, though they made them no wiser than I am myself, while those that are above me have enough higher to read." *

The sentiments expressed in this passage are illustrative of the modesty of Baxter, and of his distrust of his own understanding on the difficult subjects of the apocalyptic visions. Without subscribing to the propriety of regarding these visions as unintelligible, considering the little success which has attended the speculations of many respecting their design, diffidence on such subjects is much more a Christian virtue than confidence. It is not difficult to frame a prophetic hypothesis, and to adjust its parts with considerable skill and ingenuity; but to prove that it is the very thing intended by the angel of the apocalypse, requires a portion of wisdom from Him who alone can open its seals, which does not yet appear to have been afforded to any of the sons of men. But while there is much that is obscure in the book, it is delightful to find so much that is intelligible; and that though many of the symbols and hiero-

* Advertisement to 'Paraphrase on the New Testament.'

glyphics yet remain to be deciphered, the suffering and glory of the Redeemer, the final triumphs of his kingdom and its everlasting duration, are revealed with a clearness not inferior even to that of the Gospel itself.

A posthumous work of a devotional nature by Baxter, appeared after his death, with the following title: 'Monthly Preparations for the Holy Communion, by R. B. To which is added suitable Meditations, before, in, and after recovery; with Divine Hymns in common tunes, fitted for Public Congregations or Private Families.' 1696. 12mo.

This little work has a preface by Sylvester, in which it is very singular that he makes no mention whatever of the meditations as the productions of Baxter. There can be no doubt, however, that they were published from some of Baxter's manuscripts, left in possession of the editor, or that they were furnished by some one who took notes while Baxter delivered them. I am inclined to think the latter must have been their origin; as some of the language is like Baxter's, but other parts of it not. Of the hymns I am unable to form any opinion, whether they were composed by Baxter, or some one else. Their devotion is more worthy of admiration than their poetry.

I must now introduce a class of Baxter's writings, with which few of the readers of his works are familiar. I refer to his poetry, of which I should have been afraid to speak with much confidence in my own judgment, had not Montgomery given him a place among the Christian poets of England, and spoken of him in the following terms:

"This eminent minister of the Gospel, though author of some of the most popular treatises on sacred subjects, is scarcely known by one in a hundred of his admirers, as a writer in verse; yet there is a little volume of 'Poetical Fragments' by him, inestimable for its piety, and far above mediocrity in many passages of its poetry. The longest piece, entitled, "Love breathing thanks and praise,' contains his spiritual auto-biography, from the earliest impressions made upon his conscience by divine truth, to the breaking out of the civil war between Charles I. and the parliament. In this, and indeed in all the other minor pieces, he speaks the language of a minute self-observer, and tells the experience of his own heart in strains which never lack fervency, nor indeed eloquence, however unapt in the art of turning tuneful periods in rhyme the author may occa-

sionally be found. A great portion of this volume well merits re-publication, as the annexed examples will prove. He that is not powerfully affected by some of these, whatever be his taste in polite literature, may fear that he has neither part nor lot in a matter of infinitely surpassing interest even to himself." [s]

The volume, of which Mr. Montgomery thus speaks, and from which he inserts some striking extracts, was first published in 1681, in small 12mo, with the following singular title: 'Poetical Fragments: Heart-Employment with God and itself. The concordant discord of a broken healed heart; sorrowing, rejoicing, fearing, hoping, living, dying.'

"These poetical fragments," he says, "except three heretofore printed, were so far from being intended for the press, that they were not allowed the sight of many private friends, nor thought worthy of it: only, had I had time and heart to have finished the first, which itself, according to the nature and designed method, would have made a volume far bigger than all this, being intended as a thankful historical commemoration of all the notable passages of my life, I should have published it as the most self-pleasing part of my writings. But, as they were mostly written in various passions, so passion hath now thrust them out into the world. God, having taken away the dear companion of the last nineteen years of my life, as her sorrows and sufferings long ago gave being to some of these poems, for reasons which the world is not concerned to know; so my grief for her removal, and the revived sense of former things, have prevailed with me to be passionate in the open sight of all." [t]

He afterwards published 'Additions to the Poetical Fragments, written for himself, and communicated to such as are more for serious verse than smooth.' 1683. He left also, fully prepared for the press, an entire poetical version, or 'Paraphrase of the Psalms of David, with other Hymns,' which were published after his death in 1692, by his friend, Matthew Sylvester. Putting all his pieces together, therefore, we have sufficient means of determining Baxter's claims to the character of a poet.

He himself was not ignorant of the qualities which are necessary to constitute excellence in this department of literature, and puts in his own claims very modestly. "I will do," he says, "my wise friends, whose counsel I have much followed,

[s] Montgomery's Christian Poet, p. 320. [t] Epistle, p. 1.

that right, as to acquit them from all the guilt of the publication of these fragments. Some of them say, that such work is below me; and those that I think speak more wisely, say, I am below such work. These I unfeignedly believe. I have long thought that a painter, a musician, and a poet, are contemptible if they be not excellent; and that I am not excellent, I am satisfied; but I am more patient of contempt than many are. Common painters serve for poor men's works; and a fiddler may serve at a country wedding. Such cannot aspire to the attainments of the higher sort, and the vulgar are the greater number. Dr. Stillingfleet saith, 'I seldom follow my friends' advice;' in this I justify him, though in other things my advisers contradict him. I know that natural temper makes poetry savour to several wise and learned men, as differently as meats do to various appetites. I know such learned discreet men, that know not what a tune is, nor can difference one from another. I wonder at them; and oft doubt whether it be an accident, or an integral of humanity which they want. Annatus, the Jesuit, in his answer to Dr. Twisse De Scientia Media, commends his poetry, (for a poem added in the end,) in scorn, as if it were a disgrace to a school divine. I take one sign of an acumen of wit to make it likely that the man hath the same wit for other work.

"For myself, I confess that harmony and melody are the pleasure and elevation of my soul. I have made a psalm of praise in the holy assembly the chief delightful exercise of my religion and my life, and have helped to bear down all the objections which I have heard against church music, and against the 149 and 150th Psalms. It was not the least comfort that I had in the converse of my late dear wife, that our first in the morning, and last in bed at night, was a psalm of praise, till the hearing of others interrupted it. Let those that savour not melody, leave others to their different appetites, and be content to be so far strangers to their delights." [v]

In as far as genius and imagination are essential to the character of a poet, it is impossible to doubt that Baxter possessed high claims to that distinction. His prose writings are full of poetry. His genius every now and then bursts forth where we least expect its appearance; and in no writer of the age are there so many passages exquisite for their pathos and tenderness, or dazzling with splendour. His language is often re-

[v] Epistle, pp. 2, 3.

markable for its chasteness, and for its rhythm; so that it would only require a little skill in the mechanical construction of verse, to convert many of his pages into the sweetest poetry.

That he was not skilled in versification, is, at the same time, very obvious. He had the ideas of poetry, and often the expressions also, but could not frame them skilfully, according to the laws of verse. This kind of employment required more patience and labour than he was capable of bestowing. He could not waste time on the collocation of words and syllables; and hence he often becomes tame and prosaic, in immediate connexion with the utterance of the finest and loftiest conceptions.

He lived during what Johnson calls "the age of the metaphysical poets;" whom he describes as learned men, who made it their whole endeavour to show their learning. They yoked the most heterogeneous ideas together by violence; ransacked nature and art for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions. They were fond of conceits, both of idea and phraseology; they broke every image into fragments, and mixed the sublime and ridiculous, the lofty and the low, in the most extraordinary manner. Such were Donne and Denman, Waller and Cowley, according to Johnson; and such he would have reckoned Baxter, had he met with any of his poetical effusions.

The longest of Baxter's poetical pieces, as Montgomery has remarked, is a fragment of his own life and experience in verse. It is entitled 'Love breathing Thanks and Praise,' and is full of the most glowing gratitude. From this poem an extract or two has already been given in the first part of this work. The opening lines run, with a slight exception, very smoothly. They discover the school to which the author belonged, in the manner in which he pursues the leading figure of a worm praising God. Yet there is nothing offensive in the thought or the language.

"Eternal God! this worm lifts up the head,
And looks to Thee, by Thee encouraged;
Cheer'd by thy bounty, it would speak thy praise,
Whose wond'rous love hath measur'd all my days.
If thou vouchsafe to make a worm rejoice,
Give him a thankful praising heart and voice.
Thy shining glory blessed angels see:
Angels must sing thy highest praise, not we.
But if thy warming beams cause worms to speak
Their baser part will not the concert break.
When time was yet no measure, when the sun
Its rapid motion had not yet begun,

When heav'n, and earth, and sea, were yet unfram'd
Angels and men, and all things else un-nam'd;
When there did nothing else exist but thee,
Thou wast the same, and still the same wilt be.
When there was none to know or praise thy name,
Thou wast in perfect blessedness the same." [x]

In the following passage a most original and poetical image is employed with great felicity, to illustrate the re-forming of man in God's own image. The idea of the Deity taking the signet from his own right hand, to form the stamp by which his own offending creature is to be restored to holiness and bliss, is exquisite in itself, and uncommonly well sustained.

" When man from holy love turn'd to a lie,
Thy image lost, became thine enemy;
O what a seal did love and wisdom find
To re-imprint thine image on man's mind!
Thou sent'st the signet from thine own right hand;
Made man for them that had themselves unman'd.
The Eternal Son, who in thy bosom dwelt,
Essential burning love, men's hearts to melt;
Thy lively image; he that knew thy mind,
Fit to illuminate and heal the blind.
With love's great office thou didst him adorn,
Redeemer of the helpless and forlorn.
On love's chief work and message he was sent:
Our flesh he took, our pain he underwent.
Thy pardoning, saving love to man did preach:
The Reconciler stood up in the breach.
The uncreated image of thy love,
By his assumption and the Holy Dove,
On his own flesh thine image first imprest;
And by that stamp renews it on the rest." [y]

The account of his early experience, and of the steps by which he was first led to choose God for his portion, and then his work as his great employment, is very admirably given. In the following passage he describes how God takes advantage of the natural love of self which belongs to man, and implants his own fear, as a seedling which gradually ripens into the love of God and of goodness, and brings forth fruit to his glory.

" Fear is the soil that cherisheth the seed,
The nursery in which heav'n's plants do breed.
God first in nature finds self-love, and there
He takes advantage to implant his fear.
With some, the time is long before the earth
Disclose her young one by a springy birth.
When heav'n doth make our winter sharp and long,
The seed of love lies hid, or seems but young,

[x] Poetical Fragments, p. 1. [y] Ibid. pp. 6, 7.

But when God makes it spring-time, his approach
Takes from the barren soil its great reproach;
When heav'n's reviving smiles and rays appear,
Then love begins to spring up above fear;
And if sin hinder not by cursed shade,
It quickly shoots up to a youthful blade.
And when heav'n's warmer beams and dews succeed,
That's ripen'd fruit which e'en now was but seed.
Yet doth not flow'ring, fruitful, love forget
Her nursing fear, there still her root is set;
In humble self-denial undertrod,
While flower and fruit are growing up to God."[1]

There is a short poem, entitled 'The Resolution,' which was composed when he was silenced and cast out of the church. It conveys his reflections on that sorrowful event, and expresses his high determination to suffer the loss of all things for Christ's sake. The following lines, referring to the dispersion of friends, the storms of life, and the final assembling, are very beautiful, though the figure is not uncommon.

"As for my friends, they are not lost:
The several vessels of thy fleet,
Though parted now by tempests tost,
Shall safely in the haven meet.
Still we are centred all in Thee;
Members, tho' distant of one head,
In the same family we be,
By the same faith and Spirit led.
Before thy throne we daily meet,
As joint petitioners to Thee;
In spirit we each other greet,
And shall again each other see.
The heavenly hosts, world without end,
Shall be my company above;
And thou, my best, my surest Friend,
Who shall divide me from thy love?"[2]

From the dialogue between Flesh and Spirit, I have already given a very beautiful extract, in noticing the work on self-denial, to which it was first attached. The dialogue between Death and a Believer is very gravely intended, and contains some very good passages, but is occasionally ludicrous. The same remark applies to the poems on grace, wisdom, madness, hypocrisy, and man. They abound with the faults of the metaphysical poets, interspersed with flashes of real poetical genius.

His Psalms are far from contemptible; for, although few of them are without rugged and prosaic lines, they frequently contain very good stanzas. He had evidently bestowed con-

[1] Poetical Fragments, p. 16. [2] Ibid. p. 41.

siderable pains on his version. There is a peculiarity in the structure of the verse, which often discovers mechanical ingenuity, though it contributes frequently to destroy the poetry. By putting certain words in a different character within brackets, he contrives to make the verse long or short, as these words are used or omitted. He did this, he tells us, because "nature weary of sameness, is re-created with a variety of tunes." I shall give as a specimen the first stanzas of the twenty-third Psalm, printed after this plan, which may be considered a fair average sample of the whole.

"The Lord himself my shepherd is,
Who doth me feed and [safely] keep;
What can I want that's truly good,
While I am [one of] his own sheep?
He makes me to lie down and rest
In [pleasant] pastures, tender grass;
He keeps and gently leadeth me
Near [the sweet] streams of quietness.
My failing soul he doth restore,
And lead in [safe and] righteous ways;
And all this freely, that his grace,
And [holy] name may have the praise."

It is pleasant to remark the delight and enjoyment which this holy man felt in sacred poetry and music; a delight which he seems to have cherished to the very last. Sylvester tells us in his preface to his Psalms, that "when his sleep was intermitted or removed in the night, he then sang much; and on the Lord's-days, he thought the service very defective, without some considerable time were spent in singing; nay, he believingly expected that his angelical convoy would conduct him through all the intermediate regions, to his appointed mansion in his heavenly Father's house, with most melodious hallelujahs, or with something equally delightful." In this frame of mind, he probably was when he composed his 'Exit,' and his 'Valediction.' In both he takes his leave of the world, satisfied to be gone, and longing for the enjoyment of his Lord. I quote a few stanzas from the former, as a *vale* to the poetry of Baxter.

"My soul, go boldly forth,
Forsake this sinful earth;
What hath it been to thee
But pain and sorrow?
And thinkest thou 'twill be
Better to-morrow?

Look up towards heav'n and see
How vast those regions be,

Where blessed spirits dwell,
How pure and lightful!
But earth is near to hell,
How dark and frightful!

Jerusalem above,
Glorious in light and love,
Is mother of us all.
Who shall enjoy them?
The wicked hell-ward fall,
Sin will destroy them.

God is essential love;
And all the saints above
Are like unto him made,
Each in his measure.
Love is their life and trade,
Their constant pleasure.

What joy must there needs be,
Where all God's glory see!
Feeling God's vital love,
Which still is burning:
And flaming God-ward move,
Full love returning.

Lord Jesus, take my spirit:
I trust thy love and merit;
Take home this wand'ring sheep,
For thou hast sought it;
This soul in safety keep,
For thou hast bought it." [b]

I have dwelt longer on Baxter's poetical pieces than, to some, their importance may seem to justify. I have been the more particular, however, because they are less known than most of his writings, and because they form a very appropriate conclusion to his devotional works. They show what every thing which Baxter wrote confirms, that his religion was a religion of enjoyment. It is the more necessary to remark this, because a superficial observer may be induced to suppose that the contrary was the case. His writings, it will be remarked, speak much of mortification, and self-denial, and crucifixion. They do; and Baxter felt himself impelled to dwell on these subjects, because he regarded the evils which render them necessary as the true banes of man's happiness. He was persuaded that, till the habit of resisting and conquering the flesh and the world be formed, and unless it be kept in constant exercise, no real enjoyment can be found. The self-denial which he, therefore, inculcated, arose out of the state of

[b] Poetical Fragments, pp. 148—153.

human nature, and was directed to the highest good of man—the enjoyment of the divine complacency.

Baxter was probably regarded by the men of the world of his own age, as one of the most demure, joyless, mortified persons on earth; and such, on their principles, he certainly was. Yet Baxter was a singularly happy man. He tells us that he knew nothing of low spirits or nervous depression, notwithstanding all his bodily sufferings. His hopes of heaven and its blessedness were rarely clouded from the beginning to the end of his Christian course. His hands were constantly full of his Master's work, and his heart ardently set upon the accomplishment of it. The pulse of the Christian life ever beat most vigorously in his veins; the Christian walk he steadily pursued; and its close was as peaceful and serene as its progress had been honourable.

It is pleasing to read of the melody of his feelings, of the tenderness or "passion" of his heart, of his songs in the night, and his delight in sacred poetry and music. They are evidences of the rest which his soul had found in God. There was a close and holy union between the fountain of living joy and his renovated spirit. "Being justified by faith, he had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God." Devotion was his element, and its exercises were his delight. By this means he renewed his impaired strength, restored his lost tranquillity, and replenished his exhausted comfort. It was the master-principle of his mind and character; that which harmonized and adjusted all their movements, and guided all their aims. I may, with the greatest propriety, accommodate to himself the beautiful description which he gives of a Christian's devout meditations in the conclusion of his 'Saint's Rest.'

"As Moses, before he died, went up into Mount Nebo, to take a survey of the land of Canaan, so he ascended the mount of contemplation, and by faith surveyed his heavenly rest. He looked on the delectable mansions, and said, 'Glorious things are deservedly spoken of thee, thou city of God.' He heard, as it were, the melody of the heavenly choir, and said, 'Happy the people that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' He looked upon the glorious inhabitants, and exclaimed, 'Happy art thou, O, Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord!' He looked on

the Lord himself, who is their glory, and was ready, with the rest, to fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. He looked on the glorified Saviour, and was ready to say 'Amen,' to that new song, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' He looked back on the wilderness of this world, and blessed the believing, patient, despised saints; he pitied the ignorant, obstinate, miserable world. For himself, when thus employed, he said, with Peter, 'It is good to be here,' or, with Asaph, 'It is good for me to draw near to God.' Like Daniel, in his captivity, he daily opened his window, looking towards the Jerusalem that is above, though far out of sight. Like Paul's affections towards his brethren, though absent in the flesh from the glorified saints, he was yet with them in spirit, joying and beholding their heavenly order." [c]

Engaging so deeply in these delightful exercises of holy contemplation, he was thus eminently qualified to explain and recommend them to others. They constitute the life of the soul, the beauty of religion, the glory of the Christian. "As the lark sings sweetly while she soars on high, but is suddenly silenced when she falls to the earth; so is the frame of the soul most delightful and divine, while it keepeth God in view by contemplation. But, alas! we make there too short a stay, and lay by our music." [d]

Will the reader now join with me in closing this chapter with the beautiful prayer which concludes the 'Rest?' "O Thou, the merciful Father of spirits, the attractive of love, and ocean of delight! draw up these drossy hearts unto thyself, and keep them there till they are spiritualized and refined! Second thy servant's weak endeavours, and persuade those that read these lines to the practice of this delightful, heavenly work! Oh! suffer not the soul of thy most unworthy servant to be a stranger to those joys which he describes to others; but keep me while I remain on earth in daily breathing after thee, and in a believing, affectionate walking with thee. And when thou comest, let me be found so doing: not serving my flesh, nor asleep with my lamp unfurnished, but waiting and longing for my Lord's return. Let those who shall read these pages, not merely read the fruit of my studies, but the breathing of my active hope and love; that if my heart were

[c] 'Saint's Rest,' 4to. p. 814. [d] Ibid. p. 815.

open to their view, they might there read thy love most deeply engraven with a beam from the face of the Son of God; and not find vanity, or lust, or pride within, where the words of life appear without; that so these lines may not witness against me; but, proceeding from the heart of the writer, may be effectual, through thy grace, upon the heart of the reader, and so be the savour of life to both.'[e]

[e] 'Saint's Rest,' 4to. p. 815.

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

Baxter, the author of Prefaces to many Books by others—Leaves various Treatises in Manuscript—His extensive Correspondence still preserved—Letter to Increase Mather—Account of Transactions with his Booksellers—Concurrence of Opinions respecting him as a Writer—Barrow—Boyle—Wilkins—Usher—Manton—Bates—Doddridge—Kippis—Orton—Addison—Johnson—Grainger—Wilberforce—His own Review of his Writings—Its characteristic candour and fidelity—The magnitude of his Labours as a Writer—The number and variety of his Works—His Readiness—His Style—Sometimes injudicious both in his Writings and his Conduct—Deficient in the full statement of Evangelical Doctrine—Causes of this Deficiency—Conclusion.

HAVING laid before the reader some account of every book published by Baxter, as far as can be ascertained, with those observations which have been suggested by their nature and design, it only remains that I should collect together some miscellaneous circumstances, which could not properly be noticed under any of the preceding heads, and offer some concluding remarks on the character of Baxter as a writer.

Besides the books he wrote himself, he prefixed, generally at the desire of their respective authors, prefaces or commendatory epistles to a great number of publications. Of these, Calamy has given the following enumeration, which I have no doubt could be greatly increased, were it of sufficient importance to devote the time which such a research would require:

"We have a preface of his before Mr. Swinnock's book of 'Regeneration;' another before a book of Mr. Eede's; another before Mr. Jonathan Hanmer's 'Exercitation of Confirmation;' another before Mr. Lawrence's, of 'Sickness;' two before two of Mr. Tombes's books; another before a discourse of Mr. William Bell's, of 'Patience;' an introduction to Mr. Jos.

Allein's 'Life;' a preface to his 'Alarm to the Unconverted;' another to Howe's 'Blessedness of the Righteous;' another to Mr. Clark's 'Annotations on the New Testament;' another to Mr. Abraham Clifford's 'Discourse on the Two Covenants;' another to one edition of Mr. Rawlet's book of the 'Sacrament:' another to the eleventh of Scuder's 'Daily Walk;' another to Mr. William Allen, of the 'Covenants;' another to a book of Dr. Bryan's, of 'Dwelling with God;' another to Mr. Hotchkis's 'Forgiveness of Sin;' another to Mr. Gouge's 'Surest and Safest Way of Thriving;' another to Mr. Obed. Wills, of 'Infant Baptism,' against Mr. Danvers's; and one to Mr. Corbet's 'Remains;' with many others." [f]

Baxter left several treatises in a more or less prepared state for publication, besides all that he published himself. Some of these saw the light afterwards, others remain or have been destroyed. His work on 'Universal Redemption,' 'The Protestant Religion Justified,' his 'Poetical Paraphrase of the Psalms,' the 'Narrative of his own Life,' his 'Mother's Catechism,' 'Monthly Preparation for the Communion,' have all been noticed already among his posthumous publications.

Into the subject of what he calls 'Physical Predetermination,' he appears to have entered very largely; and there yet remains among his manuscripts what would make a considerable volume on it. It seems to be in reference to this manuscript, that he says in his Own Life:

"When I had written my book against Mr. Gale's 'Treatise for Predetermination,' and was intending to print it, the good man fell sick of a consumption, and I thought it meet to suspend the publication, lest I should grieve him, and increase his sickness, of which he died. And that I might not obscure God's providence about sin, I wrote and preached two sermons to show what great and excellent things God doth in the world by the occasion of man's sin; and, verily, it is wonderful to observe that in England all parties, prelatical first, Independents, Anabaptists, especially Papists, have been brought down by themselves, and not by the wit and strength of their enemies; and we can hardly discern any footsteps of any of our own endeavours, wit, or power, in any of our late deliverances, but our enemies' wickedness and bloody designs have been the occasion of almost all: yea, the Presbyterians themselves have suffered more by the dividing effects of their own covenant, and

[f] Abridgment, vol. i. pp. 241, 242.

their unskilfulness in healing the divisions between them and the Independents and Anabaptists and the Episcopalians, than by any strength that brought them down; though since men's wrath hath trodden them as in the dirt." [g]

On the subject of predestination, Baxter says a great deal in the second book of his Catholic Theology, in which he endeavours to reconcile "the Synodists and Arminians, the Calvinists and Lutherans, the Dominicans and Jesuits." Judging from what he says on the subject in that work, I should not suppose that his separate treatise throws much light on it, or that the world sustains a great loss from its suppression. Theophilus Gale, for whom this intended treatise was designed, was one of the profoundest scholars and theologians of his time. His learning was more extensive and accurate than Baxter's, and his judgment, both in metaphysics and theology, more correct. His 'Court of the Gentiles,' in which, among other subjects, he discusses predestination, and free-will, and their consistency with each other, is, without exception, the profoundest book of the age. It contains greater stores of pagan and sacred learning, on every thing relating to the whole range of philosophy and religion, than any book which had previously appeared.

Baxter left also 'Divers Disputations on sufficient Grace; several Miscellaneous Disputations on various Questions in Divinity, briefly managed at the Monthly Meeting' of Ministers held while he was at Kidderminster. 'Two Replies to Mr. Lawson's Animadversions on his Aphorisms;' 'A Reply to Warren's Animadversions' on the same book; and the commencement of 'A Reply to Dr. Wallis's Animadversions:' beside many other pieces in a more or less prepared state for publication. Most of these treatises still remain among the Baxter MSS. deposited in the Redcross-street library. None of them appear to me to be deserving of publication; as among the printed works of Baxter sufficient is to be found already on all the subjects of which they treat.

The most interesting portion of these manuscript collections is the correspondence. There are many hundred letters between Baxter and his friends on a great variety of subjects; extending from an early period of his public life till near the time of his death. Sylvester appears to have intended the publication of a

[g] Life, part iii. p. 185. There is another passage in Baxter's Life in which he speaks disrespectfully of Gale and his work; this he was too apt to do, where he differed from a brother author.—Part iii. p. 183.

volume of these letters;[h] but, for reasons which do not appear, abandoned the design. All Baxter's manuscripts in his possession were at last deposited in the hands of Dr. Williams's trustees, by whom they have been carefully preserved.

Though I did not find on examining these letters much additional matter that could be used in this Life of Baxter, he having published every thing of importance respecting himself, I feel satisfied that a volume or two of very interesting letters might be furnished from them. An editor of competent abilities and leisure could produce a very valuable selection. Among Baxter's correspondents were some of the most distinguished men of his times. Lord Chief-Justice Hale, the Duke of Lauderdale, Lord Clarendon, the Earl of Orrery, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Brownrigge, Henry More, Glanville, Robert Boyle, Greaves, Henry Dodwell, Heylin, Bruno Ryves, Gataker, Vines, Owen, Howe, Bates, Peter Du Moulin, Dr. Hill, Arrowsmith, Burgess, William Penn, Eliot, Mather of New England, and a multitude of others. Many of Baxter's letters to his friends are very long, and as he appears to have been in the practice of keeping copies of those which he regarded as important, all of which are in his own hand; his correspondence alone must have created to him vast labour. In numerous instances he appears to have been treated by troublesome persons, who applied to him to solve their doubts and perplexities, and exercised his ingenuity by their cases of conscience. Where he considered the laity in earnest, he seems never to have been unwilling, though at the expense of great labour to himself, to attempt affording them satisfaction.

A short letter that he wrote to Increase Mather, which Palmer thinks may have been among the last he ever wrote, is so excellent and characteristic of the writer, that it will not be considered out of its place here. It refers to Cotton Mather's Life of Eliot, the apostle of the Indians, and the valued correspondent of Baxter.

"Dear Brother,

"I thought I had been near dying at twelve o'clock in bed: but your book revived me; I lay reading it until between one and two. I knew much of Mr. Eliot's opinions by many letters which I had from him. There was no man on earth whom I honoured above him. It is his evangelical work that is the

[h] Preface to Baxter's MSS.

apostolical succession which I plead for. I am now dying I hope as he did. It pleased me to read from him my case. 'My understanding faileth, my memory faileth, and my hand and pen fail, but my charity faileth not.' That word much comforted me. I am as zealous a lover of the New England Churches as any man, according to Mr. Noyes', Mr. Norton's, and Mr. Mitchael's, and the Synod's model. I love your father upon the letters I received from him. I love *you* better for your learning, labours, and peaceable moderation. I love your *son* better than either of you, for the excellent temper that appeareth in his writings. O that godliness and wisdom may thus *increase* in all families. He hath honoured himself half as much as Mr. Eliot, I say half as much, for deeds excel words. God preserve you and New England. Pray for your fainting languishing friend,

"Aug. 3, 1691. Ri. Baxter."[1]

A person who had so much to do with the press as Baxter, must have been connected with the principal religious booksellers of the period, and a knowledge of his transactions with them must throw some light on the extent to which religious works were circulated at this time. From the multitude of books published by Baxter, many of which appear to us uninteresting, it appears surprising that the author should have found encouragement to print them. It appears, however, that he could not only publish without risk, but that they were the source of a considerable revenue, which he generally applied to some benevolent purpose. In the following document, written as a vindication of himself from a charge of ruining his booksellers, he gives a very interesting account of the manner in which he transacted business with them. It affords us also some additional illustration of the circumstances and the disinterestedness of Baxter. After adverting to several of the false charges which had been circulated against him, he thus proceeds:

"But now comes a new trial: my sufferings are my crimes. My bookseller, Nevil Symmonds, is broken, and it is reported that I am the cause, by the excessive rates that I took for my books of him; and a great dean, whom I much value, foretold that I would undo him. Of all the crimes in the world, I least expected to be accused of covetousness. Satan being the master of this design to hinder the success of my writings

[1] Palmer's Noncon. Mem. vol. iii. p. 406.

when I am dead, it is part of my warfare, under Christ, to resist him. I tell you, therefore, truly all my covenants and dealings with booksellers to this day.

"When I first ventured upon the publication of my thoughts, I knew nothing of the art of booksellers. I did, as an act of mere kindness, offer my book called 'The Saint's Rest,' to Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton, to print, leaving the matter of profit, without any covenants, to their ingenuity. They gave me ten pounds for the first impression, and ten pounds a piece, that is, twenty pounds for every after impression, till 1665. I had, in the mean time, altered the book, by the addition of divers sheets. Mr. Underhill died; his wife became poor. Mr. Tyton had losses by the fire in 1666. They never gave, nor offered me a farthing for any impression after that, nor so much as one of the books; but I was fain out of my own purse to buy all that I gave to any friends or poor person that asked it.

"This loosening me from Mr. Tyton, Mr. Symmonds stepped in, and told me that Mr. Tyton said he never got three-pence by me, and brought witness. Hereupon I used Mr. Symmonds only. When I lived at Kidderminster, some had defamed me of a covetous getting of many hundred pounds by the booksellers. I had, till then, taken of Mr. Underhill, Mr. Tyton, and Mr. Symmonds, for all, save the 'Saint's Rest,' the fifteenth book, which usually I gave away; but if any thing for second impressions were due, I had little in money from them, but in such books I wanted at their rates. But when this report of my great gain came abroad, I took notice of it in print, and told that I intended to take more hereafter: and ever since I took the fifteenth book for myself and friends, and eighteen-pence more for every ream of the other fourteen which I destinated to the poor. With this, while I was at Kidderminster, I bought Bibles, to give to all the poor families; and I got three hundred or four hundred pounds, which I destined all to charitable uses. At last, at London, it increased to eight hundred and thirty pounds, which, delivering to a worthy friend, he put it into the hands of Sir Robert Viner, with a hundred pounds of my wife's, where it lieth, settled on a charitable use after my death, as from the first I resolved. If it fails, I cannot help. I never received more of any bookseller than the fifteenth book, and this eighteen-pence a ream. And if, for after impressions, I had more of those fifteenths than I gave away, I took about two

third parts of the common price of the bookseller, or little more, and oft less; and sometimes I paid myself for the printing many hundreds to give away; and sometimes I bought them of the bookseller above my number, and sometimes the gain was my own necessary maintenance; but I resolved never to lay up a groat of it for any but the poor.

"Now, sir, my own condition is this: Of my patrimony or small inheritance I never took a penny to myself, my poor kindred needing much more. I am fifteen or sixteen years divested of all ecclesiastical maintenance. I never had any church or lecture that I received wages from, but, within these three or four years much against my disposition, I am put to take money of the bounty of special particular friends; my wife's estate being never my property, nor much more than half our yearly expense. If, then, it be any way unfit for me to receive such a proportion as aforesaid, as the fruit of my own long and hard labour for my necessary and charitable uses; and if they that never took pains for it have more right than I, when every labourer is master of his own, or if I may not take some part with them, I know not the reason of any of this. Men grudge not a cobbler, or a tailor, or any day labourer, for living on his labours, and why an ejected minister of Christ, giving freely five parts to a bookseller, may not take the sixth to himself, or to the poor, I know not. But what is the thought or word of man?

"Dr. Bates now tells me, that for his book, called the 'Divine Harmony,' he had above a hundred pounds, yet reserving the power for the future to himself; for divers impressions of the Saint's Rest, almost twice as big, I have not had a farthing: for no book have I had more than the fifteenth book to myself and friends, and the eighteen-pence a ream for the poor and works of charity, which the devil so hateth, that I find it a matter past my power, to give my own to any good use; he so robs me of it, or maketh men call it a scandalous thing. Verily, since I devoted all to God, I have found it harder to give it when I do my best, than to get it: though I submit of late to him partly upon charity, and am so far from laying up a groat, that (though I hate debt) I am long in debt," &c. &c. &c. [k]

This letter was written in 1678. In his Life, Baxter declares, that Symmons must have received in mere charity from him, that is, I suppose, more than he was strictly entitled to demand,

[k] Appendix to Baxter's Own Life, No. xii.

a sum not less than five hundred pounds, if not nearly a thousand. The money which Baxter appropriated from his profits to a charitable purpose, he unfortunately lost by the shutting up of the exchequer; so that the hard-earned gains of many years were lost in one day. From Baxter's statement of the agreement with the booksellers, it is very evident that the circulation of his works must have been extensive to enable them to afford the sums which he expended. Comparing these with the compensation received for Paradise Lost, it is clear that the publishers and the public then were better judges of poetry than of theology. A singular reverse has taken place since that period.

There is a remarkable concurrence of opinions respecting the character and talents of Baxter, even among those who must be regarded as unfavourable to many of the sentiments for which he contended. This agreement can be accounted for only on the ground, that the high integrity of his character and the superiority of his talents were beyond dispute; and that the evident tendency of all his writings is to promote the best interests of men. His contemporaries in the church, as well as his brethren out of it, unite in their testimony to his worth and greatness, and the value of his writings.

Dr. Barrow said, his practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted. With a view to his casuistical writings, the honourable Robert Boyle, declared, "He was the fittest man of the age for a casuist, because he feared no man's displeasure, nor hoped for any man's preferment." Bishop Wilkins observed of him, that he had cultivated every subject he had handled; that if he had lived in the primitive times, he would have been one of the fathers of the church; and that it was enough for one age to produce such a person as Mr. Baxter. Archbishop Usher's high thoughts of him, appeared in his earnest importunity to induce him to write on the subject of conversion. Dr. Manton thought Mr. Baxter came nearer the apostolical writings than any man in the age. Dr. Bates' opinion of his eloquence has been given already. "His books," he says, "for their number and variety of matter, make a library. They contain a treasure of controversial, casuistical, and practical divinity. His books of practical divinity have been effectual for more numerous conversions of sinners to God, than any printed in our time; and while the church remains on

earth, will be of continual efficacy to recover lost souls. There is a vigorous pulse in them that keeps the reader awake and attentive."[1]

Few men were capable of forming a better or more candid opinion of Baxter than Dr. Doddridge. He was well acquainted with his writings, very similar to him in his sentiments, and partook largely of his desire to be useful to all men. He thus expresses his opinion of his character as a writer:

"His style is inaccurate, because he had no regular education; and because he wrote continually in the views of eternity: but judicious, nervous, spiritual, and remarkably evangelical: a manly eloquence, and the most evident proof of an amazing genius: with respect to which he may not improperly be called the English Demosthenes: exceeding proper for conviction: see his 'Saint's Rest,' all his treatises on conversion, and especially his 'Call to the Unconverted,' 'Divine Life, and Counsels to Young Men:' few were ever more instrumental for awakening and converting more souls. His book of converse with God in solitude, is a most sublime piece of devotion: his Gildas Salvianus is a most extraordinary piece, and should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care; and I think the practical part of it deserves to be read every two or three years: for nothing has a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which many good men are but shadows of what by the blessing of God they might be, if the maxims and treasures laid down in that incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued."[m]

In a letter to a friend, giving him some account of his studies, Doddridge says, "Baxter is my particular favourite. It is impossible to tell you how much I am charmed with the devotion, good sense, and pathos, which is every where to be found in him. I cannot forbear looking upon him as one of the greatest orators, both with regard to copiousness, acuteness, and energy, that our nation hath produced; and if he hath described, as I believe the temper of his own heart, he appears to have been so far superior to the generality of those whom we charitably hope to be good men, that one would imagine that God raised him up to disgrace and condemn his brethren; to show what a Christian is, and how few in the world deserve the character. I have lately been

[1] These testimonies are collected by Fawcett in the Preface to his 'Abridgment of the Saint's Rest.'

[m] Orton's 'Letters to Dissenting Ministers,' vol. i, pp. 185, 186.

reading his Gildas Salvianus, which hath cut me out much work among my people. This will take me off from so close an application to my private studies, as I could otherwise covet, but may answer some valuable ends with regard to others and myself."

But these commendatory opinions of Baxter have not been confined to evangelical Churchmen and Dissenters; the literary men of the nation have not been backward to express their approbation of Baxter's talents and piety. Dr. Kippis, under the article 'Doddridge' in the 'Biographia Britannica,' institutes a comparison between him and Job Orton, the author of 'Doddridge's Memoirs.'—"It has occurred," he says, "to us, that Mr. Orton, who so long resided at Kidderminster, the principal seat of Mr. Baxter's ministerial usefulness, had a considerable resemblance in certain respects to that famous divine. In extent of abilities, Baxter was greatly superior to Mr. Orton, and he prodigiously exceeded him in the multiplicity of his writings; but with regard to the nature of their practical works and the strictness, we had almost said the rigidness, of their personal piety, there was no small degree of similarity. Both of them display in their productions the same ardent zeal to excite the attention of men to their eternal concerns, and urge these concerns with peculiar energy and pathos. Both of them were animated with a seriousness of spirit which seems never to have forsaken them in the most ordinary occurrences of life; nor could either of them bear to be much interrupted in their sacred employments. When some visitors to Mr. Baxter, after having sitten awhile with him, said, 'We are afraid, sir, that we break in upon your time?' His answer was, 'To be sure you do.'"

While this passage shows the high idea which Kippis entertained of Baxter's character, I conceive that the points of resemblance between him and Orton were very few. Orton was stiff, formal, and cautious to a fault, not to mention other particulars; qualities the very opposite of those which distinguished Baxter, whose warmth and energy often involved him in difficulties, which the timid prudence of the other was sure to prevent. The souls of the two men were cast in totally different moulds. Baxter would have set the world on fire, while Orton was lighting a match.

Orton himself held Baxter in the highest veneration. In one of his letters to the Rev. Mr. Hughes, he says, "I would

Biographia Britannica, vol. v. p. 314.

recommend you to read some practical divinity every day; especially the works of Howe, Henry, Watts, Doddridge, and writers of that strain and spirit, whom God eminently honoured as instruments of great usefulness in his church. Above all, Baxter, who was, with regard to the success of his labours and writings, superior to them all." [o]

"Addison says, 'I once met with a page of Mr. Baxter; upon the perusal of it, I conceived so good an idea of the author's piety, that I bought the whole book.' Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his 'Rambler,' has quoted Baxter twice, (No. 71 and 196) in such a manner as to show that he considered his name to be worthy of a place amongst the highest authorities. He is also frequently mentioned in Johnson's conversations with Boswell: and once, when Boswell asked him what works of Richard Baxter he should read? 'Read any of them,' said the sage, 'for they are all good.'" [p]

But no writer has more accurately or candidly sketched the character of Baxter than Grainger, whose invaluable Biographical History supplies information about numerous individuals, of whom no account is any where else to be found; and who rarely distorts his portraits under the influence of personal or professional prejudice.

"Richard Baxter," he says, "was a man famous for weakness of body and strength of mind; for having the strongest sense of religion himself, and exciting a sense of it in the thoughtless and the profligate; for preaching more sermons, engaging in more controversies, and writing more books, than any other Nonconformist of his age. He spoke, disputed, and wrote with ease; and discovered the same intrepidity when he reproved Cromwell and expostulated with Charles II. as when he preached to a congregation of mechanics. His zeal for religion was extraordinary; but it seems never to have prompted him to faction, or carried him to enthusiasm. This champion of the Presbyterians was the common butt of men of every other religion, and of those who were of no religion at all. But this had very little effect upon him: his presence and his firmness of mind on no occasion forsook him. He was just the same man before he went into a prison, while he was in it, and when he came out of it; and he maintained a uniformity of character to the last gasp of his life. His enemies have

[o] Orton's 'Letters to Dissenting Ministers,' vol. i. p. 103.
[p] Ibid. pp. 315, 316.

placed him in hell; but every man who has not ten times the bigotry that Mr. Baxter himself had, must conclude that he is in a better place. This is a very faint and imperfect sketch of Mr. Baxter's character. Men of his size are not to be drawn in miniature. His portrait, in full proportion, is in his 'Narrative of his own Life and Times,' which, though a rhapsody, composed in the manner of a diary, contains a great variety of memorable things, and is, in itself, as far as it goes, a history of Nonconformity." [q]

I cannot close this collection of testimonies to the merits of Baxter, without adding that of Mr. Wilberforce, a name which will ever be dear to every friend of religion and humanity. I cannot help saying, however, he ought not to have considered Baxter as exclusively the property of the church of England. Baxter, though not properly a Dissenter, was, in the strictest sense of the term, a Nonconformist. "I must beg," says Mr. Wilberforce, "to class among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England, this great man, who, with his brethren, was so shamefully ejected from the church in 1662, in violation of the royal word, as well as of the dear principles of justice. With his controversial pieces I am little acquainted; but his practical writings, in four massy fólios, are a treasury of Christian wisdom. It would be a most valuable service to mankind to revise them, and, perhaps, to abridge them, to render them more suited to the taste of modern readers. This has been already done in the case of his 'Dying Thoughts,' a beautiful little piece, and of his 'Saint's Rest.' His 'Life,' also, written by himself, and in a separate volume, contains much useful matter, and many valuable particulars of the history of the times of Charles I., Cromwell," &c. [r]

Having presented to the reader a selection of the opinions which have been expressed of Baxter, as a writer, by men of the first eminence, both in his own times and since, I have reserved his own opinion, or review, for the last. As no man was so fully acquainted with his writings as himself, so no one could express a more enlightened or candid opinion of them than he has done. It leans to the side of severity rather than of leniency, and presents so amiable a view of the author's character that it cannot fail to excite esteem and admiration. Combined with his review of his Christian character and experience, it presents what Grainger justly calls a full-length portrait of the

[q] Biog. Hist. vol. v. pp. 81, 82. [r] Wilberforce's Practical Piety, p. 24.

man. He judged himself that he might not be judged, and was evidently far more sensible of his own imperfections, and more ready to censure them than any, even of his bitterest opposers. He constantly defended the integrity of his character and the purity of his motives, but was most willing to acknowledge that none of his works were without spot or blemish before God.

"Concerning almost all my writings, I must confess that my own judgment is, that fewer well studied and polished had been better; but the reader who can safely censure the books, is not fit to censure the author, unless he had been upon the place, and acquainted with all the occasions and circumstances. Indeed, for the 'Saint's Rest,' I had four months' vacancy to write it, but in the midst of continual languishing and medicine: but, for the rest, I wrote them in the crowd of all my other employments, which would allow me no great leisure for polishing and exactness, or any ornament; so that I scarce ever wrote one sheet twice over, nor stayed to make any blots or interlinings, but was fain to let it go as it was first conceived; and when my own desire was rather to stay upon one thing long than run over many, some sudden occasions or other extorted almost all my writings from me; and the apprehensions of present usefulness or necessity prevailed against all other motives: so that the divines which were at hand with me still put me on, and approved of what I did, because they were moved by present necessities, as well as I: but those that were far off, and felt not those nearer motives, did rather wish that I had taken the other way, and published a few elaborate writings; and I am ready myself to be of their mind, when I forgot the case that I then stood in, and have lost the sense of former motives. The opposing of the Anabaptists, Separatists, Quakers, Antinomians, Seekers, &c., were works which then seemed necessary; and so did the debates about church-government and communion, which touched our present practice: but now, all those reasons are past and gone, I could wish I had rather been doing some work of more durable usefulness. But, even to a foreseeing man, who knoweth what will be of longest use, it is hard to discern how far that which is presently needful may be omitted, for the sake of a greater, future good. There are some other works wherein my heart hath more been set than any of those forementioned, in which I have met with great obstructions: for I must declare, that in this, as in many other matters, we are

not the choosers of our own employments, any more than of our own successes.

"And yet, that I may not say worse than it deserveth of my former measure of understanding, I shall truly tell you what change I find now in the perusal of my own writings. Those points which then I thoroughly studied, my judgment is the same of now as it was then, and therefore in the substance of my religion, and in those controversies which I then searched into with some extraordinary diligence, I find not my mind disposed to a change: but in divers points that I studied slightly, and by the halves, and in many things which I took upon trust from others, I have found since that my apprehensions were either erroneous or very lame. And those things which I was orthodox in, I had either insufficient reasons for, or a mixture of some sound and some insufficient ones, or else an insufficient apprehension of those reasons; so that I scarcely knew what I seemed to know: and though in my writings I found little in substance which my present judgment differeth from, yet in my 'Aphorisms' and 'Saint's Rest,' which were my first writings, I find some few unmeet expressions, and one common infirmity. I perceive that I put off matters with some kind of confidence, as if I had done something new or more than ordinary in them, when, upon my more mature reviews, I find that I said not half that which the subject did require. As, *e. g.*, in the doctrine of the covenants and of justification, but especially about the divine authority of the Scripture in the second part of the 'Saint's Rest,' where I have not said half that should have been said; and the reason was, because that I had not read any of the fuller sort of books that are written on those subjects, nor conversed with those that knew more than myself, and so all those things were either new or great to me which were common and small, perhaps, to others; and because they all came in by the way of my own study of the naked matter, and not from books, they were apt to affect my mind the more, and to seem greater than they were. And this token of my weakness so accompanied those my younger studies, that I was very apt to start up controversies in the way of my practical writings, and also more desirous to acquaint the world with all that I took to be the truth, and to assault those books by name which I thought did tend to deceive them, and did contain unsound and dangerous doctrine; and the reason of all this was, that I was then in the vigour of my youthful apprehensions, and the new

appearance of any sacred truth, it was more apt to affect me and be more highly valued than afterwards, when commonness had dulled my delight; and I did not sufficiently discern then how much, in most of our controversies, is verbal, and upon mutual mistakes. And, withal, I knew not how impatient divines were of being contradicted, nor how it would stir up all their powers to defend what they have once said, and to rise up against the truth which is thus thrust upon them as the mortal enemy of their honour: and I knew not how hardly men's minds are changed from their former apprehensions, be the evidence never so plain. And I have perceived that nothing so much hinders the reception of the truth as urging it on men with too harsh importunity, and falling too heavily on their errors: for hereby you engage their honour in the business, and they defend their errors as themselves, and stir up all their wit and ability to oppose you. In controversies, it is fierce opposition which is the bellows to kindle a resisting zeal; when, if they be neglected, and their opinions lie awhile despised, they usually cool and come again to themselves. Men are so loth to be drenched with the truth, that I am no more for going that way to work: and, to confess the truth, I am lately much prone to the contrary extreme, to be too indifferent what men hold, and to keep my judgment to myself, and never to mention any thing wherein I differ from another on any thing which I think I know more than he; or, at least, if he receive it not presently, to silence it, and leave him to his own opinion; and I find this effect is mixed according to its causes, which are some good and some bad. The bad causes are, 1. An impatience of men's weakness, and mistaking forwardness, and self-conceitedness. 2. An abatement of my sensible esteem of truth, through the long abode of them on my mind. Though my judgment value them, yet it is hard to be equally affected with old and common things, as with new and rare ones. The better causes are, 1. That I am much more sensible than ever of the necessity of living upon the principles of religion which we are all agreed in, and uniting in these; and how much mischief men that overvalue their own opinions, have done by their controversies in the church; how some have destroyed charity, and some caused schisms by them, and most have hindered godliness in themselves and others, and used them to divert men from the serious prosecuting of a holy life; and, as Sir Francis Bacon saith in his Essay of Peace, 'that it is one great benefit of church peace and concord,

that writing controversies is turned into books of practical devotion for increase of piety and virtue.' 2. And I find that it is much more for most men's good and edification, to converse with them only in that way of godliness which all are agreed in, and not by touching upon differences to stir up their corruptions, and to tell them of little more of your knowledge than what you find them willing to receive from you as mere learners; and therefore to stay till they crave information of you. We mistake men's diseases when we think there needeth nothing to cure their errors, but only to bring them the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed before men are apt to receive that evidence. And, therefore, that church is happy where order is kept up, and the abilities of the ministers command a reverend submission from the hearers, and where all are in Christ's school in the distinct ranks of teachers and learners; for in a learning way men are ready to receive the truth, but in a disputing way, they come armed against it with prejudice and animosity.

"And I must say, further, that what I last mentioned on the by, is one of the notablest changes of my mind. In my youth, I was quickly past my fundamentals, and was running up into a multitude of controversies, and greatly delighted with metaphysical and scholastic writings, (though, I must needs say, my preaching was still on the necessary points,) but the older I grew, the smaller stress I laid upon these controversies and curiosities, though still my intellect abhorreth confusion, as finding far greater uncertainties in them than I at first discerned, and finding less usefulness comparatively, even where there is the greatest certainty. And now it is the fundamental doctrines of the Catechism which I most highly value, and daily think of, and find most useful to myself and others. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, do find me now the most acceptable and plentiful matter for all my meditations. They are to me as my daily bread and drink; and, as I can speak and write of them over and over again, so I had rather read or hear of them, than of any of the school niceties, which once so much pleased me. And thus I observed it was with old Bishop Usher, and with many other men. And I conjecture that this effect also is mixed of good and bad, according to its causes. The bad cause may, perhaps, be some natural infirmity and decay. And, as trees in the spring shoot up into branches, leaves, and blossoms, but in the autumn the life drains down

into the root; so possibly, my nature, conscious of its infirmity and decay, may find itself insufficient to the attempting of difficult things, and so my mind may retire to the root of Christian principles, and also, I have often been afraid, lest ill rooting at first, and many temptations afterwards, have made it more necessary for me than many others, to retire to the root and secure my fundamentals. But, upon much observation, I am afraid lest most others are in no better a case.

"The better causes are these: I value all things according to their use and ends, and I find in the daily practice and experience of my soul, that the knowledge of God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the truth of Scripture, and the life to come, and of a holy life, is of more use to me than all the most curious speculations. I know that every man must grow as trees do, downwards and upwards both at once; and that the roots increase as the bulk and branches do. Being nearer death and another world, I am the more regardful of those things which my everlasting life or death depend on. Having most to do with ignorant, miserable people, I am commanded by my charity and reason to treat with them of that which their salvation lieth on; and not to dispute with them of formalities and niceties, when the question is presently to be determined, whether they shall dwell for ever in heaven or in hell. In a word, my meditations must be most upon the matters of my practice and my interest; and as the love of God, and the seeking of everlasting life, is the matter of my practice and my interest, so must it be of my meditation. That is the best doctrine and study which maketh men better, and tendeth to make them happy. I abhor the folly of those unlearned persons, who revile or despise learning, because they know not what it is: and I take not any piece of true learning to be useless; and yet my soul approveth of the resolution of holy Paul, who determined to know nothing among his hearers, that is comparatively to value and make ostentation of no other wisdom, but the knowledge of a crucified Christ; to know God in Christ is life eternal. As the stock of the tree affordeth timber to build houses and cities, when the small though higher multifarious branches are but to make a crow's nest or a blaze, so the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, of heaven and holiness, doth build up the soul to endless blessedness, and affordeth it solid peace and comfort; when a multitude of school niceties serve but for vain janglings and hurtful diversions and contentions, and yet I would not dissuade my reader

from the perusal of Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, Arminiensis, Durandus, or any such writer; for much good may be gotten from them: but I would persuade him to study and live upon the essential doctrines of Christianity and godliness, incomparably above them all. And that he may know that my testimony is somewhat regardable, I presume to say that in this, and as much gainsay my natural inclination to subtilty and accurateness in knowing, as he is like to do by his if he obey my counsel: and I think, if he lived among infidels and enemies of Christ, he would find, that to make good the doctrine of faith and life eternal were not only his noblest and most useful study, but also that which would require the height of all his parts, and the utmost of his diligence, to manage it skilfully to the satisfaction of himself and others.

"I add, therefore, that this is another thing which I am changed in, that whereas in my younger days I never was tempted to doubt of the truth of Scripture or Christianity, but all my doubts and fears were exercised at home, about my own sincerity and interest in Christ, and this was it which I called unbelief; since then my sorest assaults have been on the other side, and such they were, that had I been void of internal experience and the adhesion of love, and the special help of God, and had not discerned more reason for my religion than I did when I was younger, I had certainly apostatized to infidelity. I am now, therefore, much more apprehensive than heretofore of the necessity of well grounding men in their religion, especially of the witness of the indwelling Spirit; for I more sensibly perceive, that the Spirit is the great witness of Christ and Christianity to the world. And though the folly of fanatics tempted me long to overlook the strength of this testimony of the Spirit, while they placed it in a certain internal assertion, or enthusiastic inspiration; yet now I see that the Holy Ghost, in another manner, is the witness of Christ, and his agent in the world. The Spirit in the prophets was his first witness, and the Spirit by renovation, sanctification, illumination, and consolation, assimilating the soul to Christ and heaven, is the continued witness to all true believers: and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) Even as the rational soul in the child is the inherent witness or evidence that he is the child of rational parents. And, therefore, ungodly persons have a great disadvantage in their resisting temptations to unbelief, and it is no wonder if Christ be a stumbling-block to the Jews,

and to the Gentiles foolishness. There is many a one that hideth his temptations to infidelity, because he thinketh it a shame to open them, and because it may generate doubts in others; but I doubt, the imperfection of most men's care of their salvation, and of their diligence and resolution in a holy life, doth come from the imperfection of their belief of Christianity and the life to come. For my part, I must profess, that when my belief of things eternal and of the Scripture is most clear and firm, all goeth accordingly in my soul, and all temptations to sinful compliances, worldliness, or flesh-pleasing, do signify worse to me than an invitation to the stocks or Bedlam. And no petition seemeth more necessary to me than,—I believe, help thou my unbelief. Lord, increase our faith.

"Accordingly, I had then a far higher opinion of learned persons and books than I have now; for what I wanted myself, I thought every reverend divine had attained, and was familiarly acquainted with. And what books I understood not by reason of the strangeness of the terms or matter, I the more admired, and thought that others understood their worth. But now experience hath constrained me against my will to know, that reverend learned men are imperfect, and know but little as well as I, especially those that think themselves the wisest: and the better I am acquainted with them, the more I perceive that we are all yet in the dark. And the more I am acquainted with holy men, that are all for heaven, and pretend not much to subtleties, the more I value and honour them. And when I have studied hard to understand some abstruse admired book, (as *De Scientia Dei, De Providentia circa Malum, De Decretis, De Prædeterminatione, De Libertate Creaturæ*, &c.) I have but attained the knowledge of human imperfection, and to see that the author is but a man as well as I.

"And at first I took more upon my author's credit than now I can do: and when an author was highly commended to me by others, or pleased me in some part, I was ready to entertain the whole; whereas now I take and leave in the same author, and dissent in some things from him that I like best, as well as from others.

"At first, I was greatly inclined to go with the highest in controversies on one side or other; as with Dr. Twisse and Mr. Rutherford, and Spanhemius de Providentia et Gratia, &c. But now I can so easily see what to say against both extremes, that I am much more inclinable to reconciling principles. And whereas then I thought that conciliators were but ignorant men,

that were willing to please all, and would pretend to reconcile the world by principles which they did not understand themselves, I have since perceived, that if the amiableness of peace and concord had no hand in the business, yet greater light and stronger judgment usually is with the reconcilers, than with either of the contending parties, as with Davenant, Hall, Usher, Lud. Crocius, Bergius, Strangius, Camero, &c. But on both accounts their writings are most acceptable; though I know that moderation may be a pretext of errors.

"At first, the style of authors took as much with me as the argument, and made the arguments seem more forcible, but now I judge not of truth at all by any such ornaments or accidents, but by its naked evidence.

"I am much more cautelous in my belief of history than heretofore. Not that I run into their extreme, that will believe nothing, because they cannot believe all things. But I am abundantly satisfied by the experience of this age, that there is no believing two sorts of men, ungodly men, and partial men, though an honest heathen of no religion may be believed, where enmity against religion biasseth him not; yet a debauched Christian, besides his enmity to the power and practice of his own religion, is seldom without some further bias of interest and faction, especially when these concur; and a man both ungodly and ambitious, espousing an interest contrary to a holy, heavenly life, and also factious, embodying himself with a sect or party suited to his spirit and designs, there is no believing his word or oath. If you read any man partially bitter against others, or differing from him in opinion, or as cross to his greatness, interest, or designs, take heed how you believe any more than the historical evidence distinct from his word compelleth you to believe. The prodigious lies which have been published in this age in matters of fact with unblushing confidence, even where thousands or multitudes of eye and ear witnesses knew all to be false, do call men to take heed what history they believe, especially where power and violence afford that privilege to the reporter, that no man dare answer him, or detect his fraud, or if they do, their writings are all suppressed. As long as men have liberty to examine and contradict one another, one may partly conjecture by comparing their words, on which side the truth is like to lie. But when great men write history, or flatterers by their appointment, which no man dare contradict, believe it but as you are constrained.

"So in this age there have been such things written against parties and persons whom the writers design to make odious, so notoriously false, as you would think that the sense of their honour, at least, should have made it impossible for such men to write. My own eyes have read such words and actions asserted with most vehement, iterated, unblushing confidence, which abundance of ear-witnesses, even of their own parties, must needs know to have been altogether false; and therefore, having myself now written this history of myself, notwithstanding my protestation, that I have not in any thing wilfully gone against the truth, I expect no more credit from the reader, than the self-condensing light of the matter, with concurrent rational advantages, from persons, and things, and other witnesses, shall constrain him to. If he be a person that is unacquainted with the author himself, and the other evidences of his veracity and credibility, and I have purposely omitted almost all the descriptions of any persons that ever opposed me, or that ever I or my brethren suffered by, because I know that the appearance of interest and partiality might give a fair excuse to the reader's incredulity; except only when I speak of the Cromwellians and Sectaries, where I am the more free, because none suspecteth my interest to have engaged me against them, but with the rest of my brethren I have opposed them in the obedience of my conscience, when by pleasing them I could have had almost any thing that they could have given me; and when beforehand I expected that the present governors should silence me, and deprive me of maintenance, house, and home, as they have done to me and many hundreds more; therefore, I supposed that my description and censures of those persons who would have enriched and honoured me, and of their actions against that party which hath silenced, impoverished, and accused me, and which beforehand I expected should do so, are beyond the suspicions of envy, self-interest, or partiality: if not, I there also am content that the reader exercise his liberty, and believe no worse even of these men, than the evidence of fact constraineth them.

"And though I before told the change of my judgment against provoking writings, I have had more will than skill since to avoid such. I must mention it by way of penitent confession, that I am too much inclined to such words in controversial writings, which are too keen and apt to provoke the person whom I write against. Sometimes I suspect that age soureth my spirits, and sometimes I am apt to think that it is out of a

hatred of a flattering humour, which now prevaileth so in the world, that few persons are able to bear the truth; and I am sure that I cannot only bear myself such language as I use to others, but that I expect it. I think all these are partly causes; but I am sure the principal cause is a long custom of studying how to speak and write in the keenest manner to the common, ignorant, and ungodly people; without which keenness to them no sermon or book does much good; which hath so habituated me to it, that I am still falling into the same with others; forgetting that many ministers and professors of strictness do desire the greatest sharpness to the vulgar and to their adversaries, and the greatest lenity, and smoothness and comfort, if not honour, to themselves. I have a strong natural inclination to speak of every subject just as it is, and to call a spade a spade, and *verba rebus apiare;* so as that the thing spoken of may be fullest known by the words; which methinks is part of our speaking truly. But I unfeignedly confess that it is faulty, because imprudent; for that is not a good means which doth harm, because it is not fitted to the end; and because, whilst the readers think me angry, though I feel no passion at such times in myself, it is scandalous and a hinderance to the usefulness of what I write: and especially, because though I feel no anger, yet which is worse, I know that there is some want of honour and love, or tenderness to others; or else I should not be apt to use such words as open their weakness and offend them; and therefore I repent of it, and wish all over sharp passages were expunged from my writings, and desire forgiveness of God and man. And yet I must say, that I am oft afraid of the contrary extreme, lest, when I speak against great and dangerous errors and sins, though of persons otherwise honest, I should encourage men to them, by speaking too easily of them, as Eli did to his sons; and lest I should so favour the person as may befriend the sin and wrong the church. And I must say as the New England synodists: 'We heartily desire, that as much as may be, all expressions and reflections may be forborne that tend to break the bond of love. Indeed, such is our infirmity, that the naked discovery of the fallacy or invalidity of another's allegations or arguings is apt to provoke. This in disputes is unavoidable.'

"And, therefore, I am less for a disputing way than ever, believing that it temptethmen to bend their wits to defend their errors, and oppose the truth, and hindereth usually their infor-

mation; and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, &c. Therefore, I am most in judgment for a learning or teaching way of converse: in all companies, I will be glad either to hear those speak that can teach me, or to be heard of those that have need to learn."[a]

The life and writings of Baxter are now fully and impartially before the reader. The views entertained of them by others, and his own estimate of himself and his works, with the extended details which I have brought forward, leave little to be said in the way of a general summary. My own opinions have been always freely expressed on all the subjects which have passed successively under consideration; and, had I now been disposed to criticise the writings and character of Baxter more minutely, the extracts just given from his own pen must have, in a great measure, deprived me of the power to censure. Though not unconscious of his imperfections, I frankly acknowledge that I have been more disposed to mark his beauties, than to expose his faults; and would rather leave the reader under the impression of his many and great excellences, than minutely acquainted with his foibles and failings.

Every reader of the preceding part of this work must be struck with the magnitude of Baxter's labours as a writer. The age in which he lived was an age of voluminous authorship; and Baxter was beyond comparison the most voluminous of all his contemporaries. Those who have been acquainted only with what are called his practical or spiritual writings, form no correct estimate of the extent of his works. These form twenty-two volumes octavo, in the present edition; and yet they are but a small portion of what he wrote. The number of his books has been very variously estimated; as some of the volumes which he published contained several distinct treatises, they have sometimes been counted as one, and sometimes reckoned four or five. The best method of forming a correct opinion of Baxter's labours from the press, is by comparing them with some of his brethren, who wrote a great deal. The works of Bishop Hall amount to ten volumes octavo; Lightfoot's extend to thirteen; Jeremy Taylor's to fifteen; Dr. Goodwin's would make about twenty; Dr. Owen's extend to twenty-eight; Richard Baxter's, if printed in a uniform edition, could not be comprised in less than sixty volumes, making more than, from thirty to forty thousand closely-printed octavo pages!

[a] Life, part i. p. 137.

On this mass of writing he was employed from the year 1649, when his first work appeared, till near the time of his death in 1691, a period of forty-four years. Had he been chiefly engaged in writing, this space was amply sufficient to have enabled him to produce all his works with ease. But, it must be recollected that writing was but a small part of his occupation. His labours as a minister, and his engagements in the public business of his times, formed his chief employment for many years, so that he speaks of writing but as a kind of recreation from more severe duties. Nor is this all; his state of health must be taken into consideration, in every estimate of his work. A man more diseased, or who had more to contend with in the frame of his body, probably never existed in the same circumstances. He was a constant martyr to sickness and pain, so that how he found it practicable to write with the composure which he generally did, is one of the greatest mysteries in his history. The energy of his mind was superior to any discouragement, for, though it often felt the burden and clog of the flesh, it never gave way to its desire of ease, or succumbed under the pressure of its infirmities. He furnishes an illustrious instance of what may be done by principle, energy, and perseverance, in the most untoward and discouraging circumstances.

The subjects on which Baxter wrote embrace the whole range of theology, in all the parts of which he seems to have been nearly equally at home. Doctrinal, practical, casuistical, and polemical, all occupied his thoughts, and engaged his pen. His inquiries ranged and his writings extended from the profoundest and most abstruse speculations on the divine decrees, the constitution of man, and the origin of evil, to the simplest truths adapted to the infant mind. To say he was master of any subject, would be too much, but he must be very wise or very stupid to whom Baxter can impart no instruction. If he does not always impart light, he seldom fails to suggest some profitable reflection, or to lead his readers to discover difficulties where they had seen none before. On the most important subjects, he dwells with the greatest delight, expatiating with a freedom which evinces how fully they occupied his own mind, and interesting his readers by the earnestness of his manner and the beauty of his illustrations.

Few men, perhaps, have had greater command of their knowledge, or of the power of conveying it, than Baxter. He appears to have read everything relating to his own profession, and to

have remembered all he read. The fathers and schoolmen, the doctors and reformers of all ages and countries, seem to have been as familiar to him as the alphabet of his native tongue. He rarely makes a parade of his knowledge, but he never fails to convince that he was well acquainted with most that had been written on the subject he discusses. His mistakes were seldom the mistakes of ignorance. He laboured to derive his knowledge from the fountains of information; and considering that he had not enjoyed the benefits of a university education, the defects of it very rarely appear. Such an education might have given more correctness, but would have added nothing to the vigour of his mind.

Ever alive to the claims of duty, and the calls of Providence, he obeyed with the utmost promptitude every demand made upon him by his brethren, his country, or the state of the church. Perhaps he erred in complying too readily, and using his pen on occasions when a dignified silence would have been more suitable. His own apology, however, on the subject of his many writings, is very satisfactory. With him it was usually matter of conscience to write, and only such an acquaintance with all the circumstances as can now scarcely be had, could enable us to form a correct judgment as to the necessity which he conceived was laid upon him.

When he did write, it was with a pointed pen, which is never chargeable with obscurity or feebleness. The extent of his knowledge and his command of language, betrayed him into exuberance and redundancy. He heaps up arguments, and raises piles of reasons, scarcely knowing when to stop, or what limits to prescribe to a discussion. Though a lover of order, he had no time to arrange or select his thoughts when he sat down to write, so that he poured them forth with all the copiousness of his mind, but often with an irregularity and incongruity that materially injured their beauty and effect. He belabours an adversary till he has destroyed not only his existence but his very form. Not content with disarming him, and using his arms against himself, he seems to take pleasure in having him an object of pity, if not of scorn. His metaphysics and refinements have frequently been referred to. These constituted both his power and his weakness as a controversialist. They enabled him to discover any assailable points in the positions of his adversaries; to penetrate into every crevice, and to lay open every mistake. They at the same time supplied an almost invulnerable protec-

tion to himself. He had always ground on which he could retreat with advantage, so that he was frequently left in quiet possession of the field. This style of debate, however, enfeebled the cause, while it appeared to constitute the strength of its advocate. It rarely produced conviction of the truth, but often induced suspicion that error was lurking under the forms and behind the battlements of logic and metaphysics.

The style of Baxter is considerably diversified. It is often incorrect, rugged, and inharmonious, abounding in parenthesis and digressions, and enfeebled by expansion. It is happiest when it is divested entirely of a controversial character, and the subject relates to the great interests of salvation and charity. It then flows with a copiousness and purity to which there is nothing superior in the language in which he wrote. The vigorous conceptions of his mind are then conveyed in a corresponding energy of expression; so that the reader is carried along with a breathless impetuosity, which he finds it impossible to resist. Baxter knew nothing of that vice of learning which Bacon so beautifully describes, as consisting "more in hunting after words than matter; more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment." Baxter was superior to all this. Truth in all its majesty and infinite importance alone occupied the throne of his spirit, and dictated the forms in which its voice should be uttered. And when it spoke, it was in language divinely suited to its nature, never distracting by its turgidness, or disgusting by its regularity. He could be awful or gentle, pathetic or pungent, at pleasure; always suiting his words to his thoughts, and dissolving his audience in tenderness, or overwhelming them with terror, as heaven or hell, the mercies of the Lord, or the wrath to come, was the topic of discourse. It may confidently be affirmed, that from no author of the period could a greater selection of beautiful passages of didactic, hortatory, and consolatory writings, be made.

In the character of Baxter, both as a writer and a public man, there was a marked deficiency of wisdom. Had this been in proportion to his knowledge, his piety, and his fearlessness, he would have been unequalled among the men of his times. But in this respect he often fell far below those who were greatly his

inferiors in every other quality of mind and character. His reproofs and expostulations were frequently ill-timed and injudicious, in consequence of which they failed in producing the effect which he was most anxious to accomplish. The same remark is applicable to many of his writings; not his controversial ones only, but even his practical works, displaying frequent marks of want of judgment. This defect did not arise chiefly from the haste with which he composed. In those cases in which he bestowed most labour, we are furnished with the greatest proofs that knowledge and wisdom do not always go together; and in the conduct of great public measures, he was guilty of the greatest blunders.

This feature of his mind fully accounts for that want of consistency which is so remarkable in some parts of his conduct. It did not arise from timidity, from the fear of giving offence, or from the desire of human applause. None of these dispositions had any place in the soul of Baxter. On the contrary, his would have been a smoother and more pleasant part, had he acted decidedly with either of the two great professions, who both claimed him, and both disowned him. From this want of judgment, in the grand struggle for Nonconformity, what he built up with one hand, he pulled down with the other. He first opposed the church, and then turned round and opposed his brethren. He objected to conformity, and yet conformed; he seceded from the establishment, and yet held stated communion with it; he declined a bishoprick, and begged for a curacy. He wrote books which made many dissenters, and yet was always angry with those who dissented. He decided where he ought to have hesitated, and hesitated where he should have decided. Possessed of a firmness of character which nothing could subdue, he was yet often turned aside from his purpose for a time by a trifling difficulty, and frequently lost himself in mists of his own creating.

It is a striking fact, that men of extraordinary talents and attainments are frequently marked by the peculiarity which has been adverted to in the case of Baxter—an inaptitude to manage little matters, or to apply their general knowledge to practical purposes. Bacon could lay down laws for the government of the world, both of matter and mind, and yet could not manage with discretion his own servants. Newton could measure and weigh the universe, but in ordinary affairs manifested the simplicity of childhood. In Baxter there was a guileless simplicity

of purpose, and a straightforward earnestness in prosecuting it, which prevented his attending to those minor circumstances of manner and method that often completely frustrated the object of his strongest desire. Deceived by the purity of his own principles and aims, he often expected too much from others; and was ill prepared for the reception and opposition which he experienced. Confident in the correctness of his own opinions on some important points, and desirous of inducing all men to embrace them, he over-estimated the strength of principles in others, and moderated the difficulties which obstructed the progress of his schemes. In various respects, he was born before his time; and was therefore imperfectly adapted to the world in which he lived. His schemes of reconciliation, catholic communion, and general philanthropy, which were deemed Utopian by many, have survived the opposition which they then experienced, are no longer regarded as visionary speculation, and are destined to enjoy a still greater measure of approbation in the ages to come.

In the greater number of the practical writings of Baxter, a larger infusion of evangelical doctrine would have added greatly to their interest and effect. The fulness, freeness, and suitableness, of the grace and salvation of the Redeemer to sinners, are rather implied and assumed in his treatises than brought prominently forward or urged. That he understood them well is unquestionable; but his talent lay in dealing with sinners on somewhat different grounds. He had seen much of the abuse of the doctrines of grace, and was in consequence induced to dwell on the dangers of abusing them too frequently, and at too great length. In his system, terms, conditions, and qualifications (a phraseology foreign from the Gospel), frequently occur, embarrassing himself, and stumbling to others. His directions to the sinner, and the weak believer, are not sufficiently simple; they lead rather to the mind itself for comfort, than to the object which alone can relieve it. Faith, repentance, and good works, all of great importance in themselves, are more frequently the subjects of discourse than the person, the atonement, and the glory of the Saviour, as the ground of all hope, and the source of all consolation. In these respects, the writings of Baxter differ considerably from those of Owen, and the men of his school; though no substantial difference of sentiment subsisted between them.

Men equally sincere and enlightened in their attachment to

Christianity, view it from different points, and are variously influenced by it. Some are most attracted by its grace, others most influenced by its holiness. The divine goodness and love are consequently the chief subjects of discourse by the former, while the malignity of sin and its hatefulness to God are chiefly dwelt upon by the latter. Both hold the same sentiments respecting the two parts of divine economy, though each dwell on that, which is the principal motive to love and obedience in their respective cases. The experience of Baxter shows, that from the commencement to the close of his religious course, he was chiefly influenced by those views of God which induced hatred of sin, repentance, and self-abasement; and all that is included in the phrase—Godly fear. This led him to say,

> "Fear is to love, as was the law to grace;
> And as John Baptist goes before Christ's face,
> Preaching repentance; it prepares his way.
> It is the first appearing of the day—
> The dawning light which comes before the sun."

What he felt himself to be a great constraining principle, he naturally enough applied to others; and was thus led to dwell more on "the terrors," than the "tender mercies of the Lord."

> "My feeble new-born soul began with crying,
> My infant life did seem to me still dying,
> Betwixt supporting hope and sinking fears,
> My doubting soul did languish many years."[t]

This gives an air of sternness and severity to many of his writings, and the appearance of legality, which must not be considered as evidence that he did not understand the Gospel, enjoyed little of its consolation, or imperfectly experienced its sweetening influence. On the contrary, the very poem from which I have extracted his representation of the influence of fear, and which records his experience, is entitled 'Love breathing thanks and praise,' and affords the most delightful illustration of the power of this heavenly principle upon him. He tells us, after dwelling upon his fears,

> "At last my fears became my greatest fear,
> Lest that my whole religion should lie there.
> No man hath more of holiness than love;
> Which doth free souls by complacency move.
> A slavish fear desireth leave to sin;
> It doth but tie the hands and wash the skin.
> Hypocrites act a forced, affected part,
> Where love is absent, God hath not the heart."[u]

[t] Poetical Fragments, p. 13. [u] Ibid. pp. 14, 15.

His pantings after greater measures of holy love and delight in God, were singularly ardent; every paragraph of this poem closing with the beautiful line,

"O my dear God! How precious is thy love!"

Indeed, in all his devotional writings, the predominance of his love to God is apparent; and from the contemplation of the love of God, he derived pure and constant enjoyment.

The natural temper of Baxter was quick and irritable, impatient of contradiction, and prone to severity. This was partly owing to the diseased state of body, from which he endured constant and incredible pain. It appears that he was deeply sensible of this infirmity, and that he laboured hard to subdue it. It led him frequently to use harsh and irritating language towards his opponents, which created increased hostility, and gave them an idea that he was an unamiable man, who might be feared or esteemed, but who could not be loved. But if Baxter was easily provoked, he was ever ready to forgive. He was warm, but not irrascible. He cherished no resentments, was always happy to accept an explanation or apology, and was as prompt to pardon, as he had been ready to take offence. In the expression of all his feelings, he was open and undisguised. He always spoke from the heart, whether it was filled with indignation, or overflowed with love.

I have literally exhausted all I can say respecting the faults and infirmities of this extraordinary and excellent man. Such as they were, they were obvious on the very surface of his character; while they constitute but a small drawback on the numerous virtues by which it was adorned. In his personal character, the grace of God shone forth with distinguished lustre. The Christian ministry enjoyed in him one of its brightest ornaments, and the Nonconformists one of their ablest defenders and advocates. He died full of years and of honour, in the presence of his brethren, and lamented by all good men. He is now enjoying that 'Everlasting Rest,' of which he wrote so well, and for which he prepared so many. No sculptured monument has been reared to his memory, to mark the spot where his ashes repose. He needs it not. His name lives in his works. Among the Christian writers of our country, there is perhaps no individual who occupies so wide a circle, or who fills it with so deserved an influence, as RICHARD BAXTER.

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